Re-politicising South-South development cooperation: negotiating accountability at home and abroad

Laura Trajber Waisbich

Newnham College

University of Cambridge

January 2021

This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any work that has already been submitted before for any degree or other qualification except as declared in the preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the Degree Committee for the Faculty of Earth Sciences and Geography.

Abstract

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Accountability is a ubiquitous issue in international development cooperation. Development accountability means different things to different actors in the field and has been framed and negotiated in different ways. Governments and civil society groups in the South have historically played an important role in problematising development cooperation accountability, challenging 'traditional' donor priorities, ways of working and outcomes. In the 2010s—as Southern development providers grew in material, symbolic and political importance—accountability also emerged as a disputed issue within South-South development cooperation (SSC).

This thesis follows a multi-sited and multi-scalar approach to understanding how accountability is being conceived and disputed in the field of SSC, in global and domestic arenas, using Brazil, China and India as paradigmatic sites for inquiry. The study examines how different forms of discursive problematisations of accountability in SSC—coming from different transnational and domestic stakeholders—interact with the politicisation of SSC at different scales, and generates new forms of accountability politics and new instances of negotiation of SSC by different actors.

Assessing a kaleidoscopic and rapidly shifting landscape, this thesis shows instances where particular SSC accountability narratives and policy instruments are being generated and travelling across boundaries. It explores the kinds of sociopolitical disputes (development knowledges, geopolitical, bureaucratic and state-society relations) they create. Mapping, tracing and analysing contemporary forms of disputes over SSC accountability across scales and geographies, this study emphasises prevalent global development 'measurementalities' pushing Southern providers to craft alternative ways to measure (quantify and evaluate) their 'development effort'; and the paradoxes counting and showing SSC create domestically. It also emphasises the materiality and thus political salience of certain SSC modalities, notably agricultural development and infrastructure building, as important drivers for other ongoing sociopolitical *intermestic* SSC accountability disputes in the three countries.

Unpacking multiple global and domestic negotiations over responsibilities for doing development at home and abroad, this study offers a contribution to understanding the politicised consolidation of SSC in some of its emblematic protagonists. By doing so, it illuminates the shifting expectations of appropriate, good and just foreign policy and development cooperation in rising powers, like Brazil, China and India, in times of change.

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Acknowledgements

O correr da vida embrulha tudo.
A vida é assim: esquenta e esfria,
aperta e daí afrouxa,
sossega e depois desinquieta.
O que ela quer da gente é coragem.

[In the living of life, things get mixed up.
Life is like that: first it blows hot, then, cold;
it tightens, then looses; it soothes, then disquiets.
What life demands of us is courage.]

João Guimarães Rosa, Grande Sertão Veredas [The Devil to Pay in the Backlands], 1956

It takes not only courage but also a whole village to finish a PhD.

My deepest appreciation for my supervisor Dr. Emma Mawdsley, for being my intellectual mentor and also my compass to navigate a PhD student life in Cambridge. She was also the one who led me to both the Geography Department and to Newnham College, my two homes in town. Felt like an honour and a privilege. My gratitude to the Cambridge Trust and to Newnham College that generously enabled my doctoral research and financially supported my research endeavours in times of global turbulence.

The PhD journey is long and made of very valuable encounters, conversations and exchanges. Being here, there and everywhere, I am particularly grateful to the networks I belonged before joining the PhD and to the ones I joined here.

> To colleagues at the *Centro de Estudos e Articulação da Cooperação Sul-Sul* (Articulação SUL), for their continuous strength and tenderness. To colleagues at the *Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento* (CEBRAP), for opening me, almost a decade ago, the doors for socially implicated interdisciplinarity. To colleagues at the Collaboration for Research on Democracy (CORD), for showing me the value of trans-national collaboration.

> To colleagues at Cambridge: those orbiting Emma Mawdsley and working on South-South Cooperation for Development, including those in the India-UK Development Partnership Forum;

those in the Geographies of Knowledge research group; those doing their PhDs and Post-Docs in Geography; and those in the Department of Politics and International Studies. Thank you for sharing this research journey with me and for creating intellectually stimulating spaces to share, learn and co-construct.

To my extended research families in the United Kingdom and across geographies: at the Sussex-based Institute of Development Studies, at the Development Studies Association Rising Powers group, and to colleagues in the University of California-led 'China and the Global South' research project. Thank you for constantly opening my eyes and deepening my understanding of the field.

My whole-hearted appreciation to my own 'PhD intellectual support team', how I graciously named them, who took the time to read and comment my chapters: Aline Khoury, Angela Vinasco, Debolina Majumder, Felix Anderl, Han Cheng, Julia Rone, Lorena Gazzotti, Luara Lopes, Lucas Paes, Marina Caixeta, Melissa Pomeroy, Paola Velasco Herrejón, Supriya Roychoudhury, Udisha Saklani.

Beyond the walls of academia, my eternal gratitude to those who contributed in so many ways to shape who I am and got me going.

To my always inspiring family who taught me with words and deeds the value of love, sense of humour, courage and resilience.

To my lifetime friends in Brazil and those I met in France more than a decade ago; to those who kindly hosted me, an almost nomadic researcher, in the many cities I visited during this project; and to those I was lucky to meet in Cambridge, in particular my Mawson and Newnham crews.

My final and sincere appreciation to my research participants who agreed to receive me and share their stories and visions in Brazil, India and China—my main fieldwork sites—but also Mexico, South Africa and beyond. I recognise their kind, and often brave, gesture of sharing thoughts and life-experiences with researchers. As an implicated researcher myself, I trust the time we spent reflecting on South-South cooperation politics, policymaking and on state-society relations has proved fruitful—and even transformative—to them as well it was to me.

Glossary

ABC – *Agência Brasileira de Cooperação* [Brazilian Cooperation Agency]

AIIB – Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

AMEXCID – *Agencia Mexicana de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo* [Mexican Agency of International Cooperation for Development]

ASUL or *Articulação SUL – Centro de Estudos e Articulação da Cooperação Sul-Sul* [South-South Cooperation Research and Policy Centre]

BNDES – *Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social* [Brazilian Development Bank]

BPC – BRICS Policy Centre

BJP – India's Bharatiya Janata Party

BRI – Belt and Road Initiative

BRICS – Grouping comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa

CAITEC – Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation

CAU – China Agricultural University

CBDR – Common But Differentiated Responsibility Principle

CEAH – World Food Programme Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil

CGFome – *Coordenação-Geral de Cooperação Humanitária e Combate à Fome* [General-Coordination of Humanitarian Cooperation and International Action against Hunger, Government of Brazil]

CGU – *Controladoria Geral da União* [Federal Office of the Comptroller General, Government of Brazil]

CIDCA – China's International Development Cooperation Agency

CIDRN – China International Development Research Network

CSOs – Civil Society Organisations

DFID – United Kingdom Department for International Development

DIE - *Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik* [German Development Institute]

DPA – Development Partnership Administration, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

ECLAC – United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

ECOSOC – United Nations Economic and Social Council

EMBRAPA – *Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária* [Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation]

FAO – United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

FASE – *Federação de Órgãos para Assistência Social e Educacional* [Federation of Organs for Social and Educational Assistance]

FDI - Foreign Direct Investment

FIDC – Forum for Indian Development Cooperation

FNDE – *Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação* [National Fund for Educational Development, Ministry of Education, Government of Brazil]

G77+China – Group of 77 and China at the United Nations

GIZ – *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* [German Corporation for International Cooperation]

GPEDC – Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation

INESC – *Instituto de Estudos Socioeconômicos* [Institute for Socioeconomic Studies]

INGOs – International Non-Governmental Organisations

IPEA – *Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada* [Institute of Applied Economic Research]

IsDB - Islamic Development Bank

JICA – Japan International Cooperation Agency

LOCs/IDEAS – Lines of Credit for Development Projects, Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme

M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation

MDGs – Millennium Development Goals

MDS – *Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social* [Ministry of Social Development, Government of Brazil]

MEA – Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

MOFCOM – Ministry of Commerce, Government of China

MRE or Itamaraty – *Ministério das Relações Exteriores* [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Brazil]

NDB – New Development Bank

NeST – Network of Southern Think Tanks

NGOs – Non-Governmental Organisations

ODA – Official Development Assistance

OECD-DAC – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee

PT – *Partido dos Trabalhadores* [Brazil's Workers' Party]

PRIA – Participatory Research in Asia

REBRIP – *Rede Brasileira Pela Integração dos Povos* [Brazilian Network for Peoples' Integration]

RIS – Research Information System for Developing Countries

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

SEGIB - *Secretaría General Iberoamericana* [Ibero-American General Secretariat]

SSC – South-South cooperation

TCU – *Tribunal de Contas da União* [Federal Court of Accounts, Government of Brazil]

TOSSD – Total Official Support for Sustainable Development

UN – United Nations

UNCTAD – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNDCF – United Nations Development Cooperation Forum

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNESCAP – United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund

UNOSSC – United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation

USAID – United States Agency for International Development

WFP – United Nations World Food Programme

The struggle ensues because there is no easy way of dispensing with these universals in the condition of political modernity. Without them there would be no social science that addresses issues of modern social justice.
(Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Provincializing Europe", 2000)

The concepts of the social sciences can always be translated from one context to another, as Dipesh Chakrabarty reminds they can operate just as well outside the west as within, and just as badly.
(Timothy Mitchell, "Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity", 2002)

Introduction

Accountability is a ubiquitous issue in the field of international development cooperation. As in other spheres of public life, here too, the term appears polysemic and contentious. Accountability is an international norm, a sector of concern and intervention, a global discourse to discipline or transform power relations, and a set of mechanisms to manage development cooperation relations and policies. It is also a 'development buzzword': gaining purchase and power by embracing multiple meanings and a normative resonance that places 'the sanctity of its goals beyond reproach' (Cornwall 2007, 472). Concerns with accountability in/of development cooperation have increased immensely since the 1990s, targeting the 'accountability deficits' of Southern 'aid recipients', non-governmental organisations (NGOs), bilateral agencies, development banks, humanitarian actors, development practitioners and beyond.

Governments and civil society in the South, historically positioned as Official Development Assistance (ODA or aid) 'recipients', have been important actors in foregrounding 'aid accountability' issues. Together with critics within *Aidland,*[1] Southern actors have challenged 'donor' countries' aid priorities and practices as much as their outcomes. In the last decade, following the growth in material, symbolic and political significance of a group of (re)emerging 'development cooperation providers' from the South—including Brazil, China and India and many others—accountability has become a divisive issue within what is now widely known as South-South cooperation (SSC). It has entered diplomatic and para-diplomatic SSC policy debates and integrated the rhetoric of national and transnational civil society actors challenging SSC policy priorities or contesting interventions on the ground. In different ways, accountability also became part of policy and expert debates within large Southern providers and of their nascent SSC policy-institutional frameworks.

Despite its growing presence in policy debates, accountability in/of SSC remains poorly, and often very superficially, understood. Accountability in this thesis is defined as the continuously negotiated relationships of power and obligation between public powerholders and those subjected to or affected by their development cooperation-related actions. Accountability in SSC, therefore, concerns the forms of behaviour and social relationships between different powerholders in 'Southern providers' (elected and non-elected officials, bureaucrats, and those acting on behalf of the state) and a range of stakeholders (citizens at home, citizens abroad, other Southern governments, and traditional governmental and non-governmental development actors in the field). It also concerns the underpinning values, obligations and

[1] In this original sense, developed by aid anthropologists, *Aidland* refers to the international development industry: the lives, motivations, and personalities of development professionals, as well as the individual agency and relationships in the aid sector (Mosse 2011; Harrison 2013). In the same vein, here I refer allegorically to the social world constituted around SSC (its emerging formal and informal norms and institutions) and inhabited by SSC practitioners as the *SSC-land.*

mechanisms of power control (political, social, legal, financial and/or managerial) being negotiated between powerholders and these different groups.

This thesis provides the most detailed account to date of the ways in which international development accountability issues are travelling from, to and within the South and reaching the core of contemporary SSC politics. It investigates emerging sociopolitical disputes over what accountability in SSC means and how it should be practiced, characterised here as *SSC accountability politics*. Accountability politics as defined by Jonathan Fox (2007a, 2) is 'the arena of conflict over whether and how those in power are held publicly responsible for their decisions'. The multiple forms of SSC accountability politics mapped in this study illustrate how politically disruptive it can be to debate and act on SSC accountability both in terms of governing and disciplining 'Southern providers' (from outside and from within) as well as means to dispute and transform development. Investigating how SSC accountability is debated, negotiated and operationalised is, moreover, a window into the increasingly contested nature of SSC in key rising powers and into the multiple competing expectations over domestic and global responsibilities for/when doing development at home and abroad.

Research scope and main contributions

This thesis asks the following question:

- How is accountability being conceived and disputed in the field of South-South development cooperation?

In a complementary vein, it also asks:

- What are the issues, underpinning accountability logics and social expectations on South-South cooperation providers' policies and practices at play?
- How do emerging accountability disputes relate to the unfolding consolidation of South-South cooperation at the global level and as a domestic policy field in rising powers?

To respond to these questions, I have embarked on an inductive, empirically-driven, mapping and analysis of current SSC accountability politics based on a transnational relational comparison of three paradigmatic Southern providers: Brazil, China and India. The multi-sited and multi-scalar nature of this inquiry (detailed in **Chapter 2**) offers a wide-ranging contribution—beyond a single country or project case study—to understanding how emerging global and domestic SSC accountability politics are playing out simultaneously in a set of 'SSC protagonists' (De Bruyn 2019).

Drawing from empirical data, I have developed an integrative conceptual framework to unpack how state, civil society and external actors interact, dispute and negotiate meanings, institutional reforms and mechanisms related to public accountability in the context of SSC. **Chapter 1** locates this multidisciplinary research endeavour at the crossroads of critical development studies, international relations (IR) and accountability studies. It also introduces my framework for examining how different discursive *problematisations* of accountability in/of SSC—coming from transnational and domestic stakeholders—interact with the *politicisation* of SSC at different scales and generated instances of *negotiation* of accountability in SSC, but also of rising powers' foreign policies and international identities.

Existing scholarship has extensively explored the promises and shortcomings of the public accountability agenda in, on the one hand, politicising—and even democratising—multilateralism (Zweifel 2006; Zürn 2014) and, on the other, attempting to 'fix' North-South development cooperation practices and relations (Fox and Brown 1998; McGee 2013; Jensen and Winthereik 2013; Eyben et al. 2015). My thesis contributes to this literature with empirics from 'other existing life practices' (Chakrabarty 2008 [2000], 20), namely Southern providers, and shows how SSC accountability narratives and policy instruments are being generated, how they travel across boundaries and the kinds of sociopolitical disputes they create.

My intellectual contribution is articulated as follows. I first posit that the rise of SSC accountability politics is a response to the increasing politicisation of the global development field, as well as the politicisation of SSC amongst and within Southern providers. Politicisation is hence both cause and consequence of multiple competing actors bargaining and negotiating SSC (and SSC accountability) at home and abroad. Next, I argue that several coexisting types of disputes over accountability in/of SSC currently shape the field, both globally and within rising powers like Brazil, China and India. Disputes refer to different accountability lines (who in SSC providers is accountable to whom) and different underpinning accountability logics (international, democratic, social, bureaucratic and managerial). Disputes also refer and interact with broader sociopolitical issues shaping the way rising powers act in the field of development cooperation (development knowledges, geopolitics, bureaucratic politics and state-society relations). The particular ways in which accountability politics unfold in each setting depend on international identities and hierarchies, shifting development cooperation and foreign policy priorities, public policy and management dynamics and patterns of state-society relations. Following a fractal, juxtaposed, approach, in each chapter I examine certain aspects of this kaleidoscopic landscape and discuss politically salient forms of accountability politics taking place in global and national arenas.

In **Chapter 3**, I deconstruct and 'provincialize' (Chakrabarty 2008 [2000]) 'traditional aid' accountability dynamics. The chapter examines the particular sociopolitical and historical conditions shaping how accountability has emerged and evolved as an issue in *Aidland,* since the 1990s, within and across members of the Development Assistance Committee from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development (OECD-DAC), and in multilaterals like the World Bank. Through this account I show how the will to 'fix' accountability deficits led to 'aid reforms' and to the construction of numerous global and national accountability tools. Next, I discuss how, in the 2010s, Southern-led development cooperation became heavily scrutinised, both in the policy circles and in academia. This scrutiny, I argue, has led to the issue of transparency in SSC and of Southern providers' conformity with DAC standards and 'best practices' for donors becoming 'accountability problems' to be acted upon.

In **Chapter 4,** I discuss geopolitical and sociotechnical disputes over measuring SSC, in particular quantifying and reporting SSC flows and assessing SSC impact and effectiveness. Using the case of the Second High-Level UN South-South Cooperation Conference (BAPA+40), held in 2019, and the diplomatic and para-diplomatic negotiations before and after the event, I show rising powers' diplomatic resistance to be co-opted into existing aid measurement norms, standards and practices. I also show their discursive and knowledge battles over measuring SSC. Unfolding negotiations, I argue, reveal growing assertiveness and willingness by governmental and knowledge actors in Brazil, China and India to debate SSC measurement so as to internationally stage success, solidarity and/or generosity and find alternative, more favourable, 'Southern ways' to practice accountability. In parallel, I also discuss how Southern countries have started to put in place different accountability tools: online measurement platforms; evaluations; guidelines for projects; consultation forums; and more. This growing experimentation responded to both outside conformity pressures and SSC providers' own differentiation claims and status-seeking strategies. Lastly, I introduce the idea of 'SSC measurement paradoxes' in which Southern providers construct alternative forms of demonstrating success without challenging the ranking and 'rendering technical' (T. M. Li 2007) logics governing the field. By looking at measurement paradoxes, I also show how Southern providers navigate the domestic-foreign policy tensions that measuring, and rendering their global development engagements visible, bring about.

The following two chapters look at domestic SSC accountability politics in Brazil **(Chapter 5)** and in India and China **(Chapter 6).** These chapters explore how the global push to measure SSC manifested domestically and interacted with other types of domestic foreign policy and accountability politics in each context (including audit, managerial, politico-bureaucratic and citizenship politics). In the case of **Brazil**, I make three contributions: first, that accountability in/of Brazilian SSC has been disputed in a plural, controversial and rapidly shifting environment, marked by numerous public and expert problematisations of and negotiations over accountability. These have touched narrow (procedural) and broad (substantive) SSC accountability issues as well as narrow (SSC-specific) and broad (foreign policy and national development) policy realms. Second, Brazil is the country that has mostly experimented with quantification, reporting and assessing its development cooperation. Experimentation has been fostered by different 'development organisations' (the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, public institutions implementing technical cooperation and UN agencies) and in partnership with national knowledge actors and 'traditional' donors,

as a political tool to showcase Brazilian SSC and convince domestic and external audiences of its value. This journey to craft 'Brazilian ways' to measure SSC, I posit, created its own epistemic disputes and visibility politics. Lastly, I show how Brazilian SSC was not the subject of an all-encompassing audit attention. Audit dynamics are fragmented and responsive to the different material and political visibility of certain components of the 'Brazilian SSC compact': while the international operations of the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) were subjected to public and audit attention (due to the increased domestic political polarisation, civil society mobilisation, and the mega anti-corruption operation *Lava Jato*), Brazilian technical cooperation remained below-the-radar.

My analysis of India and China are less comprehensive—a choice I methodologically justify in Chapter 2—yet rich additions to the overall landscape of contemporary disputes over SSC accountability, and important opportunities to maintain understanding and recognition of Southern diversity and to reveal the relational politics between different Southern providers. In **India**, I depict a landscape characterised by low intensity domestic accountability politics around development cooperation, except for the case of India's Lines of Credit for Development Projects (LOCs) scheme. My initial contend is that both pan-partisan nationalistic consensus on the purposes of SSC for Indian foreign policy ambitions and domestic constituencies' low priority and lack of incentives (and resources) to monitor India's global footprint contribute to limited public and policy disputes around the role and workings of institutions involved in SSC (namely the Ministry of External Affairs – MEA and other Indian actors, including national corporations partnering with the state to implement projects overseas).

My second contribution is that attention to Indian LOCs—and the calls for increased political, legal and social accountability in this particular development financing instrument— is in contrast with the public and political invisibility of most other dimensions of the 'Indian SSC compact'. Moreover, I posit, recent changes in the LOCs scheme, including modest accountability reforms, responded mostly to diplomatic and financial sustainability needs to improve delivery and enhance this geo-economic diplomacy tool rather than to a concern with justifying it to domestic publics or with 'development effectiveness' on the ground.

Lastly, as for measurement politics, I claim that the Government of India's openly critical stances of the 'SSC accountability agenda' at the global level was matched with an internal dismissal of the issue. Those responsible and/or implementing SSC felt little pressure, or need, to expand accountability and measuring tools domestically. Likewise, those controlling the intellectual SSC agenda within India, notably the MEA-affiliated think tank Research Information System (RIS), showed little political will to operationalise an 'Indian way' to count or evaluate SSC. Domestic experimentation, therefore, mostly happened 'from below', in civil society, and was shaped by RIS's mediation role.

In **China**, I concentrated the analysis on the measurement politics of Chinese SSC. China's case is one of controlled experimentation with the managerial aspects of the SSC accountability agenda and growing, albeit selective, concerns with operationalising 'Chinese ways' to justify flows and outcomes, as means of improving the management of the country's development cooperation and the reputational risks of its ever-expanding international exposure. Looking at the policymaking landscape within China, I found that parts of the Chinese SSC bureaucracy and knowledge actors have been 'piloting' SSC measurements and engaging in controlled transparency, including in partnership with traditional development actors. Rather than an explicit need to showcase conceptual or methodological innovations, as in Brazil or India, Chinese bureaucrats and experts have often framed their efforts as part of an ongoing 'learning' journey to improve SSC management, delivery and China's practices as a development actor. Nonetheless, efforts remain marginal within the broader Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) landscape.

Next, in **Chapter 7**, I look at one particular form of accountability politics cutting across the national and transnational scales in the three countries, namely civil society pro-accountability mobilisation. Examining accountability calls 'from below' and emerging 'SSC monitoring movements', I first argue that civil society mobilisation has generated three overlapping forms of problematisation of SSC accountability related to transparency, participation and SSC development models. By disputing accountability in SSC in these three ways, civil society groups within rising powers have re-politicised SSC at home and transnationally. Second, I claim that while some projects have been targets of transnational campaigns, mobilisation by national groups in Brazil, China and India at the policy-level also happened at home. As such, campaign-like mobilisation to challenge particular 'problematic projects' (most notably on South-South agricultural cooperation and Southern development finance infrastructure building) coexisted, rather than preceded, attempts to reform state SSC-related policies in a more sustained and systematic way. Finally, I argue that civil society actors adopted a mixed of collaborative-confrontation and insider-outsider modes of engagement with those responsible and/or implementing SSC in the three countries, in an attempt to reinvent existing contestation strategies to engage rising powers in the terms of their SSC initiatives.

Chapter 8 closes this thesis by revisiting the main findings regarding the drivers for politicisation and creation of 'arenas of conflict' (Fox 2007a) over SSC accountability and the main drivers for Southern providers to act upon, reform and experiment with accountability in their development cooperation. While doing so, I review prevalent forms of SSC accountability politics across all research sites, pointing to the materiality and thus political salience of certain SSC modalities and to ubiquitous development 'measurementalities' (T. Mitchell 2002) as constitutive of many of the unfolding disputes. This final chapter also considers ongoing, and seemingly intractable, negotiations over global development responsibilities and the challenges to reimagine them in a contested 'equator-less', 'beyond aid', world (Eyben and Savage 2013; Janus, Klingebiel and Paulo 2015).

Research relevance

This study is the first comprehensive academic research and analysis on SSC accountability. Drawing on the critical turn in SSC studies, it offers an empirically rich account of how foreign policy interacts with the domestic accountability dynamics in matters of development cooperation. It engages with the stickiness and political importance of North/South identities in global development while challenging simplistic analytical assumptions of intractable North-South divides in the field.

Accountability, an apparently technical concept, can reveal profound geopolitical issues: of claimed and contested international identities, good governance discourses and 'aid conditionalities' and of persistent imaginaries of Southern countries being land of 'absences' and 'figures of lack' (McEwan 2009; Shipley 2010), 'deficient recipients' and 'incomplete donors' (Six 2009). It also reveals issues of contested Western/Eurocentrism: in the refusal of some Southern partners to adhere and be co-opted into existing OECD-led development assumptions and norms, including 'aid accountability'. It finally draws the attention to foreign and SSC policymaking dynamics and their interaction with issues of 'justice among and within states' (Mawdsley 2014a): of symbolic, discursive and material battles over who gains and who loses in development processes promoted under the South-South label and over whose voice counts to negotiate what development is or should be.

By virtue of taking place outside 'colonially-rooted discourses' separating poverty at home from poverty abroad (Mosse 2011), South-South development exchanges were initially perceived as a welcome challenge to unequal aid relations and unidirectional development policy learning. As the interactions became more frequent and more contested, investigating growing calls for and disputes over accountability helps illuminating how, and whether, alternative South-South development cooperation models generate developmental benefits while 'avoiding a race to the bottom, by competing national interests, sacrificing well-being, environmental sustainability and social and political justice' (Mawdsley 2012a, 46).

Unpacking accountability in SSC also has a policy relevance. Understanding SSC is paramount for the community of practitioners interested in the 'pathways to development cooperation accountability' in the 21st century. It also offers a window into how development accountability 'enabling and disabling factors' (Gaventa and McGee 2013) play out in different institutional contexts. This 'knowing from the South' (Sabaratnam 2011; Comaroff and Comaroff 2012) is even more important in the current context where 'the South', in all its plurality, is a hub of policy innovations and of forms of contestation that are increasingly travelling northwards. Understanding accountability politics 'from the South' provide insights not only on precarities and informalities but also on solutions that are increasingly global (Roy 2015; Constantine and Shankland 2017). This thesis offers thus a possibility to examine accountability politics in SSC as pre-figuring forms of accountability politics in 'traditional'/Northern donors in a shifting world. Ramping

inequality in advanced economies, and the budgetary trade-offs they imply, or the 'aid system fragmentation' trend within DAC donors (Kharas and Rogerson 2017; Gulrajani 2017) are powerful reminders of the policy and accountability dilemmas of both North-South and South-South cooperation in the decade ahead.

Thinking 'with and from the South' on development cooperation accountability means taking seriously the convergence and divergence dynamics within the field: recognising both the 'Southernisation' of global development (Esteves 2017; Mawdsley 2018d) and the 'isomorphic pressures' on development cooperation providers cutting across the North–South axis (Gulrajani and Faure 2019). At the same time, it means understanding the time-bounded sociopolitical configurations that shape accountability politics in Southern partners like Brazil, India and China in the post-2015 era. Navigating the tensions of understanding 'from the South' while writing from Cambridge (see Appendix 1 for an extended note), this study shows multiple accountability dynamics taking place in and around SSC and thus challenges prevailing simplistic policy and scholarly debates on 'SSC accountability deficits' and on 'development cooperation accountability as a Western issue or imposition'. It does so by adopting an analytical standpoint that embraces the interplay between structure and agency and between global and local explanatory factors shaping SSC policymaking. It looks at the category of rising powers (and at their position in existing international hierarchies) as well as at governmental, institutional and citizens' agency to explain why certain types of SSC accountability politics emerge and why. This cartography of SSC accountability politics, bridging the global circulation of policy, norms and practices *and* context-specific dynamics of policymaking and state-society relations, offers an important contribution to understanding the continuous making of 'rising powers in international development'.

Chapter 1. The politics of accountability in South-South cooperation: concepts and theories

This chapter situates accountability in/of South-South cooperation as a research topic and introduces my conceptual framework to examining it. In the next two sections, I first locate this intellectual effort at the crossroads of the multidisciplinary critical SSC and accountability scholarship and then introduce the study of accountability in/of SSC as a lens into the contested consolidation of this policy and political field in rising powers. The third section examines the state of the debate on SSC accountability. I end the chapter detailing the integrative conceptual framework that will guide my study of contemporary SSC accountability politics in this thesis.

Studying South-South cooperation 'politics in time'

South-South development cooperation, understood as the transfer and exchange of resources, technologies and knowledge between developing countries, has grown exponentially in the past two decades as a result of the increased engagement of 'new' or '(re)emerging' development cooperation 'providers'[2] from the South (Woods 2008; Mawdsley 2012a; Gu, Shankland and Chenoy 2016). Southern providers include Brazil, China, India but also South Africa, Mexico, Turkey, Indonesia, South Korea and many more, including some small, impoverished and even fragile states. Their growing role in global development has spurred the consolidation of an interdisciplinary field of studies in Northern and Southern academic and applied-research institutions (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Daley 2018; Mawdsley, Fourie, and Nauta 2019; Medina and Muñoz 2019).

Even if most Southern providers explicitly challenge the widely recognised asymmetrical 'donor-recipient' relations, power asymmetries remain constitutive of SSC. This is particularly true in the case of rising powers and other large SSC providers members of the UN 'Core Group of Southern Partners'[3] (Bracho 2017).[4]

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[2] Most Southern providers explicit reject the classic terminology 'donor-recipient' and prefer to be called 'development partners'. Throughout this dissertation I refer to them as SSC or Southern 'providers', using the term 'traditional donors' to refer to the members of the OECD-DAC and to international development organisations, such as UN agencies (e.g., UNDP), multilateral development banks (e.g., World Bank) and private foundations (e.g. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation). For an early critical discussion on the label 'donors' to refer to the Southern providers and its implications, see Mawdsley (2012a).

[3] Created in 2013, the group gathers 15 countries considered 'the main partners in South-South cooperation by the volume of development cooperation provided' (UNDESA 2014).

[4] Besides 'large' and 'small' Southern providers, Bracho also differentiates between 'Big SSC' and 'Little SSC'. The former refers to the more recent SSC agenda from the early 2000s onwards, led by rising powers, whereas the latter refers to the classic 'horizontal technical cooperation', dating back from the Third World activism during the Cold War, and as it takes places in Latin America, championed by countries like Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Cuba and Venezuela (Lechini 2009; Malacalza 2016; Muhr 2016). For more on historical and current forms of SSC, see Mawdsley (2012a); Pino (2014).

The focus of this thesis is precisely on rising powers—particularly Brazil, China and India—acting as providers of development knowledges, technologies and resources; and on the emerging accountability-related sociopolitical disputes their South-South development engagements generate.

Notwithstanding the limitations of categories such as 'rising' or 'emerging' powers,[5] this label captures Brazil, China and India's shared peripheral experiences and identities as 'Southern/developing' countries (Cesarino 2015; Fourie, Nauta and Mawdsley 2019) as well as their power, status and recognition-seeking ambitions as rapidly-growing economies, members of the BRICS, and large contributors to global development efforts (Alexandroff and Cooper 2010; Hurrell 2013; Stuenkel 2015; Gu, Shankland and Chenoy 2016). Framing their development cooperation as 'from the South, to the South' rising powers have pursued a complex 'bid for differentiation' (Abdenur 2014; Milani and Duarte 2015) and continuous 'oppositional claims' (Cesarino 2013) of non-adherence and compliance with standards formulated under the umbrella of the OECD-DAC (S. Kim and Lightfoot 2011; Zoccal and Esteves 2018). In this thesis, I recognise the performative role played by discourses of 'Southernness' while also considering the political consequences of the sociohistorical differences that separate them from the 'established/Northern' powers, thus firmly locating this research within the growing interdisciplinary body of critical work on SSC.

Critical South-South cooperation research

Critical SSC studies emerged in the mid-2000s as a lens to investigate development cooperation among developing countries beyond the grand narratives and over-simplistic scripts present in some media, policy analysis and in the early (mostly IR-centred) research on the issue (Mawdsley et al. 2019).[6] Attentive to power within and across South-South relations, this body of work questions how SSC is formulated, enacted, and performed. It deconstructs its principles and official narratives and seeks to understand the contested nature of SSC and its uneven socio, political, economic and/or environmental effects, debunking some of its political and epistemic 'myths' (Cabral et al. 2013; Bergamaschi, Moore and Tickner 2017). Critical SSC research pays attention to the conflicts and negotiations of Southern development actors at home and those resulting from South-South encounters on the ground.

[5] For a critique of the label, see Fonseca, Paes and Cunha (2016).

[6] Not coincidentally, critical SSC scholarship relied on conceptual and analytical tools from other disciplines such as development studies, anthropology, area studies, and beyond.

Drawing on the vast critical turn in social sciences and development studies,[7] this scholarship has investigated SSC through four main (and often combined) lenses: *political economy,*[8] *postcolonialism and subaltern studies,*[9] *knowledge and power*[10] and *governance.*[11] This thesis is situated at the conjuncture of the two last streams and in direct conversation with the growing domestic politics and bureaucratic turns in development cooperation studies, notably Lancaster's (2007) seminal book *Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, Domestic Politics* and subsequent studies along similar lines (e.g. Veen 2011; Yanguas and Hulme 2015; Milani 2018).[12]

Here I critically investigate SSC accountability politics as a lens into the competing interests and ideas shaping the production of foreign policy and development cooperation and its consolidation as 'a policy and political field' (Milani 2018) in large SSC providers at this particular historical juncture. Studying SSC 'accountability politics in time' (Nelson, Bloom and Shankland 2018)[13] means situating it at the crossroads of two phenomena: first, the unfolding global development convergence-divergence dynamics and, second, SSC consolidation and politicisation moment.

Global convergence-divergence dynamics

Development scholars widely agree that the 're-emergence'[14] of SSC in the early 2000s alongside the new global geographies of poverty and inequality have contributed to significantly *change* the development landscape (Mawdsley 2017; Horner and Hulme 2017; Zoccal and Esteves 2018). Together these shifts have accelerated the emergence of what some call a 'post/beyond aid world' (Mawdsley, Savage and Sung-Mi 2014; Janus, Klingebiel and Paulo 2015) and set in motion new convergence and divergence politico-

[7] In development studies, the critical turn covers not only postcolonial and de-colonial approaches to development (Escobar 2012; McEwan 2009; Comaroff and Comaroff 2012; Radcliffe 2015), but also studies on knowledge and power in development (J. Ferguson 1994; Mitchell 2002; T. M. Li 2007; Roy and Crane 2015) and their implications to 'aid bureaucracies' (Long and Long 1992; Eyben 2000; Bebbington 2006; Mosse 2005; 2011), on to how global public policies/development ideas and their 'scripts' and 'rationalities' are formed and circulate within the broader political economy (T. M. Li 2007; Mosse 2011; A. Roy 2012).

[8] See, for example, Bond and Garcia (2015); Shankland and Gonçalves (2016); Santarelli (2016); Garcia, Kato and Fontes (2012).

[9] See, for example, Six (2009); Mohan and Power (2009); Pál (2013); Amar (2013); Han (2015); Taela (2017); Sheridan (2018); Santos, Siman and Fernández (2019).

[10] See, for example, Morais de Sá e Silva (2005); Scoones et al. (2016); Santarelli (2016); Shankland and Gonçalves (2016); Zhang et al. (2019); Cheng (2020).

[11] See, for example, Leite (2013); Cesarino (2013); Cabral (2016); Zea (2016); Gu, Shankland and Chenoy (2016); Dye and Alencastro (2020). Several of the empirical-based contributions within this last stream are found in the work of scholars studying Brazil, which has been more explicitly and consistently looking at the multiple dimensions of the domestic, *intermestic*, and transnational politics of SSC (Waisbich, Pomeroy and Leite forthcoming), emphasising 'contradictions' (Milani 2018), 'disjunctions' (Santarelli 2016), and 'contestations' (Shankland and Gonçalves 2016) of Brazilian SSC. For discussions on 'contradictions' in the Indian case, see Chanana (2009); Nigam (2015).

[12] Lancaster (2007) discussed the cases of the United States, Japan, France, Germany and Denmark. Drawing on her work, Veen (2011) looked at Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway. Along similar lines, Milani (2018) has examined Brazil.

[13] The authors draw on Pierson's (2004) work on the importance of history for a range of social processes, where he argues that that placing politics in time—constructing 'moving pictures' rather than snapshots—can vastly enrich our understanding of complex social dynamics, and greatly improve the theories and methods that we use to explain them.

[14] Beyond the notion of 're-emergence' (Mawdsley 2012b), alternative characterisations include 're-birth' (Bergamaschi, Moore and Tickner 2017), 're-incarnation (Chaturvedi 2012) and the 'SSC expansionary phase' (Mawdsley 2019a).

normative dynamics between two competing 'sub-fields' (Esteves and Assunção 2014): *Aidland* and *SSC-land*. An important feature of this increasingly plural landscape, permeated by 'ambivalent, multi-dimensional and politicized' relations between emerging powers and the broader apparatus of international development (Cesarino 2013, 25), is the loss of monopoly from traditional development aid actors and consequently a loss of their hegemonic discourse (Esteves and Assunção 2014; Bracho 2017).

Before moving forward, a word on the notion of development cooperation as a 'field' and SSC as a 'sub-field'. Deriving from Pierre Bourdieu's work[15] and the 'social' and 'practice' turns in IR,[16] the notion of *social (and political) field* is important because it apprehends SSC not only as an 'issue-area' in international affairs (e.g., Malacaza 2014) or a 'foreign policy tool' (e.g., Puente 2010) but also an ensemble of rules and practices. Such conceptualisation is particularly useful as allows for situating unfolding SSC accountability politics within existing symbolic, political and material 'battles'[17] over development cooperation and over international hierarchies (Zarakol 2017). In this thesis I further combine this gaze with other non-structuralist operationalisations of the notion of *policy field* (or 'domain') in policy studies to understand SSC actors, networks and their practices (Burstein 1991; Cefaï 1996). Combined, the notions of policy, political and social fields enable a socially attentive gaze into the struggles upon the structured positions and identities of 'traditional/Northern' and 'new/Southern' development partners and into how these positions and identities are constantly renegotiated internally and externally.

Back to the shifting geographies of development cooperation, rather than an isolated phenomenon convergence-divergence dynamics are closely related to the shifting global governance dynamics (Alexandroff and Cooper 2010; Stuenkel 2016; Acharya and Buzan 2019). Disputes around SSC accountability, therefore, are nested within a broader context in which rising powers, markedly China[18], are objects of 'social pressure' or 'socialisation'[19] to comply with existing global norms and ways of acting and being 'responsible' and 'accountable' internationally. The context is also one in which Southern powerhouses act to challenge or resist these very norms and practices. Across different issue-areas, rising

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[15] Initially transposed to study the development cooperation realm by Brazilian SSC scholarship, see Esteves and Assunção (2014); Zoccal and Esteves (2018); Milani (2018); Moreira (2020).

[16] See Towns and Rumelili (2017); Zarakol (2017) for enlightening summaries of the differences in IR scholarship between structural and post-structural approaches (drawing, for instance, on critical theory and Bourdieu's notion of 'fields') and pragmatic approaches (drawing on collectives of practice, assemblage theory and others).

[17] Cesarino (2013) speaks of a 'global battleground', while Esteves and Assunção (2014) of '*doxa* battles'. The use of Bourdieu's notion of 'doxa' emphasises what is assumed and taken for granted in this particular field, paying attention to what it was constructed and enacted by traditional donors since the origins of the aid system.

[18] The focus on China has been visibly greater than in any other 'rising power'. An illustration of that can be seen in the inaugural issue of the Southern-led Rising Power Quarterly, entirely devoted to China and on its growing role in global politics. See https://risingpowersproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Rising-Powers-Quarterly-Volume-1-Issue-1.pdf (last access: 03/08/2020).

[19] The notion of 'socialisation' has been extensively explored by the French school of IR, which takes an explicitly sociological approach to the study of international affairs (e.g. Devin 2002). More recently, under the social turn in Anglophone IR, increased attention to social dynamics such as practice (Adler and Pouliot 2011), international hierarchies (Zarakol 2017), social pressure (Towns and Rumelili 2017), border-making and stigmatisation (Adler-Nissen 2014; Zarakol 2014), and ranking and status (Renshon 2017).

powers' diplomatic practices have been portrayed as 'challenging the status quo' (Badie 2013; Xiaoyun and Carey 2014; Alden and Alves 2017),[20] 'reformists' or 'modestly revisionist' (Abdenur 2014; Stuenkel 2015; Milani and Duarte 2015). Their behaviour have also been portrayed as 'ambiguous', 'inconsistent' or 'ambivalent' for adopting mix of compliance and resistance stances to the so-called 'Western international liberal order' (Sullivan de Estrada 2015; Smith 2016; D. B. Lopes, Casarões and Gama 2020).[21]

IR scholarship offers additional insights into rising powers' uneasy relationship with global development norms. Critical scholars compellingly argued that global standards and norms act as accomplices in Othering, either through 'stigmatisation' (Zarakol 2014; Adler-Nissen 2014) or 'infantilization' (Epstein 2012), and 'exert pressure on states through the hierarchical relations that they establish between them' (Towns and Rumelili 2017, 763). Towns and Rumelili further posit that different states manage social pressure *differently* (reject, abide, appear to abide, try to transform norms) according to their positions in the social hierarchy. Positionality matters here because rising powers fit in the hierarchy bounded by the constrains of a semi-peripherical (or semi-central) position but also with the rooms for manoeuvre and agency offered by their 'emergent/rising' status.

Scholarship on norm diffusion is equally useful here as to offer insights into how local actors engage and 'domesticate' global norms (e.g. Risse-Kappen 1994; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Acharya 2004). Acharya's widely referred 'localisation framework' is an important reference point to understand the normative 'translation' and 'hybridisation' work by Southern actors.[22] In conversation with Acharya, scholarship on rising powers has also discussed how Brazil, China and India attempted to craft alternative, differentiated, and innovative ways to participate in international life, either simultaneously accepting international norms' content and rejecting their implementation in practice (Kenkel and Martins 2016; Kenkel and Destradi 2019) or dealing with existing norms in innovating ways based on 'particularist practices' (Leveringhaus and Sullivan de Estrada 2018, 483). Though focused on the nuclear and human security regimes, these studies offer nuanced and multi-layered views on the normative role of Southern powers and their somehow 'dual innovation' in relation to global norms: domesticating (and hybridising) them during the internalisation process as well as creating new alternative global understandings,[23] something noticeable in matters of development cooperation accountability, as I will demonstrate.

A last relevant contribution from IR studies associates rising powers' 'diplomatic ambivalence' and domestic politics. Here scholars highlighted the 'tensions', 'ambiguities', 'dilemmas' and 'traps' embedded in the

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[20] Badie labelled this move as a 'contestation/dissent diplomacy' (*diplomatie constestataire*, in French).

[21] China is portraited as increasingly more assertive in some policy realms (Johnston 2013), but so far not changing the fundamental combination of non-conformist thinking, identity projection, and search for differentiated forms of conformity that has characterised its rise in the past decades (Leveringhaus and Sullivan de Estrada 2018).

[22] *Translation* is also a key concept in policy diffusion studies (e.g. Stone 2012; Hassenteufel and de Maillard 2013). See Porto de Oliveira and Pal (2018) for a discussion on the relation between 'translation' and 'resistance' in policy transfer.

[23] I thank Dr. Carlos Milani for enlightening me on this point (personal communication with Carlos Milani, 2020).

position of 'emerging power' and how these translated into policymaking and stances (van der Westhuizen and Milani 2019; Santos, Siman and Fernández 2019; D. B. Lopes, Casarões and Gama 2020; Haug 2020).[24] In the field of development, this gives rise to tensions between status signalling with 'becoming a provider' and domestic development needs, as well as to multiple forms of 'anxieties', including at the practitioners' level (Cheng 2020; Doucette 2020). Rising powers' compliance, resistance and/or innovation stances in the field are, therefore, unavoidably shaped by both diplomatic autonomy and status-recognition aims and by domestic politics, in which diverse national constituencies hold different expectations on SSC and on its returns. Analytically, such proposition reinforces that domestic dynamics matter: they impact on Southern providers' willingness and capacity to play active global development roles and set limits to external engagements, both structurally and across time (Six 2009; van der Westhuizen and Milani 2019).

'Co-optation' or 'Southernisation'?

Existing global development scholarship has produced different and sometimes opposing evidence on who is converging with whom on what. Some scholars describe the current landscape as a progressive 'Southernisation' of development, based on the diagnosis of a substantive and ontologically challenging 're-emergence' of SSC (Esteves 2017; Mawdsley 2018b). This process is well captured by what Zoccal and Esteves (2018) termed the 'BRICS effect', materialised, for instance, in the attractiveness of a 'Beijing consensus' on win-win economic cooperation and infrastructure building in the South or in DAC members increasingly concerned to combine aid spending with other national interests (Gulrajani 2017).

Another version of this tale looks at social policy travel 'from the South' and at how Southern-led poverty alleviation technical cooperation has changed 'traditional' donors' thematic priorities and ways of working. Examples include the renewed global fight against hunger (Stone, Porto de Oliveira and Pal 2019; Fukuda-Parr and Muchhala 2020) and the global diffusion of 'Southern-grown' social protection schemes and instruments, like Conditional Cash Transfers (Morais de Sá e Silva 2017; Osorio Gonnet 2018).[25] These policy studies highlight the particular historical juncture when rising powers acquired power, authority and resources to diffuse their policies to other developing countries and to multilaterals (Leite, Pomeroy and Suyama 2015; Milhorance and Soule-Kohndou 2017). In both tales, 'traditional' donors' ways of working and thematic priorities are seen as increasing influenced by their emulation or learnings from SSC (S. Kim and Lightfoot 2011; Constantine and Shankland 2017).

[24] Many IR scholars unpacking these dynamics have used Brazil and/or South Africa as their empirical sites. Milani, Pinheiro and M. R S. Lima (2017, 585) describe Brazil's 'graduation dilemma', for instance, as the one where 'decision-makers have the opportunity to choose and the intention of choosing between different international strategies: between a more autonomous type of development or a more dependent one; in security terms, between bandwagoning and balancing; when building a multilateral policy, between traditional alliances and innovative, flexible coalitions; in geopolitical terms and in the field of development cooperation, between an emphasis on North–South or an emphasis on South-South relations'.

[25] Here I have adopted the term 'policy diffusion' as an umbrella term for the diverse body of work on policy transfer, diffusion, circulation, and/or mobility. For a recent appraisal of these different agendas and their new research frontiers, see Porto de Oliveira and Pal (2018).

Alongside 'Southernisation', scholars have studied the opposite process: SSC convergence with existing ODA norms and practices. Convergence is due, firstly, to direct and indirect socialisation pressures, or even co-optation attempts, but also opening-up, outreach and courtship efforts by DAC donors, multilaterals and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) (Paulo and Reisen 2010; Eyben 2013; Bracho 2017). This also includes partnering with rising powers to reform SSC management and systems and/or to work together in the benefit of third countries through triangular cooperation (McEwan and Mawdsley 2012; Abdenur and Da Fonseca 2013; Leite, Pomeroy and Suyama 2015; D. Zhang 2017; Zoccal 2020a).[26] The creation of the China-DAC Study Group,[27] in 2009, or UK's DFID Emerging Powers Initiative and Strategy, exemplify this *will to work with* rising powers and shape their global development behaviour.[28] Concurrently, convergence with existing Northern standards has also been explained by a *will to integrate* coming from rising powers themselves, illustrated by a waning of the global Bandung revisionist impetus (Esteves and Assunção 2014) and the adoption of more pragmatic, result-oriented, development cooperation approaches (Suyama, Waisbich and Leite 2016; Zhang 2017; Mawdsley 2019).

While seemingly conflicting the two scripts—'Southernisation' and 'co-optation'—are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they reveal unfolding 'mutual' or 'two-way' socialisation dynamics in the field (Abdenur 2014; Alden and Alves 2017; Milhorance and Soule-Kohndou 2017), with negotiations taking place and eventually leading to the formation of new shared development norms and/or expectations on 'appropriate' development cooperation provider behaviour and new organisational structures for doing and justifying development cooperation. Accordingly, here I adopt a relational gaze that is attentive, on the one hand, to the mutually constitutive changes shaping traditional aid, SSC and North-South relations and, on the other, to the domestic-international interfaces that also shape foreign policy/SSC behaviour.

Consolidation, politicisation and accountability politics

Spatial-temporal sensitivity is key to the study of SSC. Mawdsley (2019) suggestion of a 'SSC consolidation phase' from approximately 2015 onwards offers a temporal marker for locating contemporary SSC accountability politics. According to Mawdsley, in the current 'SSC 3.0 moment', Southern providers have to 'manage the success' from the previous expansionary phase in the early 2000s.[29] As a consequence,

[26] According to the UN, triangular cooperation involves Southern-driven partnerships between two or more developing countries supported by one or more developed countries or multilateral organizations to implement development cooperation programmes and projects (UN 2012).

[27] The group functioned briefly, mostly between 2009 and 2011. See https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/china-dac-study-group.htm (last access: 27/07/2020).

[28] The Rising Powers Initiative, previously called Rising Powers Hub, is a portfolio with several initiatives that contribute to this socialising goal, such as the BBDI – Building Brazilian Development Impact in Low Income Countries (led by the then DFID Brazil) or DFID China Partnership with the Development Research Centre of the State Council of China on Knowledge for Development to 'provide an intellectual force to China's international opening up strategy' (DFID 2017b; DFID 2017a).

[29] In Mawdsley periodisation, the first phase corresponds to the initial SSC moment under the Cold War 'Bandung Spirit' and its subsequent developments, in the late 1970s, when SSC principles were agreed at the 1978 United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries, giving birth to the landmark Buenos Aires Action Plan (BAPA). This was

important shifts in narratives, modalities and institutions are taking place within key SSC providers and at the global level, including: (i) more pragmatic/result-oriented SSC narratives; (ii) less strong non-interference modalities of engagement; and (iii) less ideational and operational distinction from DAC members. Albeit tentative, this periodisation captures changes unfolding in Brazil, China and India in the last decade. The exact dates and the nature of these 'consolidation', 'institutionalisation' or 'professionalisation' dynamics, as they have been referred, can vary across countries.[30] Yet the year of 2015 is undeniably a global watershed, with the approval of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

This thesis draws on this proposition as to unpack particular sociopolitical dynamics generated by this somewhat successful expansionary phase in large SSC providers focusing on the politicised nature of this consolidation moment. In particular, it focuses on the growing need Brazil, China and India have to manage sociopolitical conflicts over their SSC, including *accountability-related conflicts,* as one of the key dynamics in this particular historical juncture.

Much of the initial characterisation of large Southern providers has emphasised the diversity of institutional forms and practices across countries but also its low institutionalised, emerging, in-the-making character (Cesarino 2013; Cabral 2016; Gu, Shankland and Chenoy 2016; Bergamaschi, Moore and Tickner 2017). Scholars have also highlighted the decentralised, fragmented and/or institutionally dispersed nature of SSC policy-making and implementation (Leite et al. 2014; Gu, Chen and Haibin 2016; Doucette 2020) and the *ad hoc*, 'learning by doing' and 'testing waters' approaches adopted by SSC partners (Chaturvedi 2012; Shimomura and Ohashi 2013; D. Zhang 2020). More recent studies suggested, however, the occurrence of institutional reforms, such as the creation of development cooperation agencies in a range of Southern countries, including in China, but also re-arrangements due to the relative contraction of SSC activities in countries like Brazil, South Africa, and other Latin American nations (Mawdsley 2019; Cesarino 2019; Medina and Muñoz 2019; D. Zhang 2020). Either way, the majority of SSC providers seem to be moving towards experimenting with institutionalisation.[31]

Dynamics of policy and institutional change are an entry door for questions of accountability politics, which become constitutive of SSC *disputed or contested institutionalisation* dynamics, globally and within large Southern providers. An assumption underpinning this thesis is that disputed institutionalisations shape and are shaped by new forms of re-politicisation of SSC. Politicisation, a major concept for the study of policy and

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followed by a second phase, *South-South Cooperation 2.0*, which corresponds to the re-emergence of SSC in the early 2000s and to its significant expansion. See Morais de Sá e Silva (2010) for an alternative chronology.

[30] Brazilian scholars, for instance, point to an institutionalisation phase starting in Brazil from 2010 onwards (Ramanzini Jr., Mariano, and Almeida 2015; Milani 2017; Cesarino 2019), a period that coincides with the end of Lula da Silva's era. In India, debates about institutional reforms started around 2010, even if the enacting of changes, including the creation of India's development agency, the MEA-affiliated DPA, happened some years later (Chaturvedi 2012).

[31] Here the idea of institutionalisation follows Douglas North's (1990) classic definition of institutions as the 'rules of the game' governing social interactions.

development processes, is understood here along the lines suggested by Tania Li (2007), as the act of rendering visible the *political* character of development cooperation. This is convergent with categorisations of politicisation in world politics, such as the one offered by Zürn (2014, 50), as 'the demand for or the act of transporting an issue into the field of politics – making previously unpolitical matters political'. Or Milani and Pinheiro's (2013, 30) characterisation of politicisation in foreign policymaking as the 'intensification of the debate of ideas, values and interests on political choices, and also *et pour cause*, of inter and intra-bureaucratic disputes, debates between different social actors and the best way to consider their demands'. In all three definitions, 'the political' refers, as argued by Chantal Mouffe (1993), to the occurrence of agonism in society and to the competing interests and world views different actors hold. It also refers to the 'practice of politics': 'the critical scrutiny, in word and deed, of the truths of government, opening them up for contestation and debate between people with different interests and claims' (T. M. Li 2007, 270).

SSC was born out of an explicitly politically radical discourse by the then Third World during the Cold War around global economic justice. Its expansion in the 2000s reflected somewhat updated claims and hopes of its transformative potential. SSC re-emerged as desired and desirable, embedded in proud official narratives on the similarities and adaptability of Southern knowledges and technologies and as a welcome expanded room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis Northern aid paradigms and conditionalities. SSC is, as suggested by Cesarino (2013, 26), 'always and already explicitly politicized' in ways Northern aid is not intended to be. If Northern aid is permeated by sanitised technical evidence-based discourses about development (J. Ferguson 1994; T. M. Li 2007; Rottenburg 2009), Southern claims to development are, alternatively, situated, and self-proclaimed as 'better' and 'more appropriate' exactly because of this political situatedness. Put it another way: while Western donors denied and concealed history (above all, colonialism), the emerging South decided to build upon it (Six 2009).

Yet SSC expansion has also led to changes in its nature towards less-radical, mainstream, techno-scientific forms of development cooperation (Morais de Sá e Silva 2005; Pino 2014; Muhr 2016). Such de-politicisation happened, for instance, through upholding conventional modernising assumptions of how development works (Han 2015; Cheng 2020) or through unidirectional sharing of Southern-grown 'best practices' from middle-income to lower-income Southern countries (Shankland and Gonçalves 2016). Both reinforced global hierarchies and underplayed the political-economic relations that constitute development challenges in the first place. In this context, the emergence of internal and external calls for Southern providers to justify their policies and practices—labelled here *SSC accountability politics*—constitute lenses into the re-politicisation of SSC coming from within Southern providers, from other Southern partners and from *Aidland*. Applying such lens into 'SSC consolidation moment' contributes, therefore, to unpacking the disputes around power and responsibility in global development and the political-institutional-citizenship dilemmas of consolidating and institutionalising development cooperation as a policy field in key Southern providers.

Accountability politics: a lens into the disputed nature of development cooperation

The word "accountability" is not a magic potion; sprinkling the term onto something does not, in and of itself, make that thing useful or good or welfare-enhancing (Honing 2020, 7)

Accountability is an old term rendered a buzzword in the new century,[32] including in global development. In English, the concept embraces the two meanings implied in the verb 'to account': the act of bookkeeping and the act of providing an account. It was this English rendition, bridging 'the financial and the moral' (Strathern 2003), that became global and slowly dislocated other concepts used to understand power and governance in public affairs (Fox 2018).

This thesis is concerned with *public accountability* in the field of development cooperation and thus with the relationships of power and obligations between public powerholders (elected officials, bureaucrats and those acting on behalf of the state) and those subjected to or affected by their development cooperation-related actions (Hickey and Mohan 2008; Bovens, Goodin and Schillemans 2014; Isunza and Lavalle 2018). Public accountability is a chameleonic and unstable concept due to its conceptual breadth, under-specificity and to the tensions between its normative and descriptive dimensions (Rached 2016). The term refers to different forms of power control and obligations: political, social, legal, financial and managerial. As a 'cultural keyword' (Dubnick 2014), moreover, it often encompasses rather than replaces correlated concepts such as responsibility, responsiveness, answerability and/or citizen oversight (Peters 2002).[33] In this thesis, I employ the notion of public accountability broadly as to embrace its multiple associated meanings. This broad operationalisation allows for an empirical mapping of multiple coexisting disputes over regulation and control of public behaviour in contemporary SSC, in its many forms. It also helps unpacking how these disputes relate to questions of domestic and international responsibility, authority and legitimacy of rising powers' foreign and development policies in the present days.[34]

From Principal-Agent to Accountability Politics

Public accountability is commonly understood as having both a 'soft' and 'hard' face, namely answerability and enforceability, of 'giving an account' and 'being held to account' (Schedler 1999; Fox 2007a). Whereas

[32] The etymology of the concept comes from the Old French words of *acont* and *acontable,* originally referring to the financial account and to the act of being called to pay or called to count on demand.

[33] On responsiveness and its linkages with the Deepening Democracy school of thought that 'advocates the direct participation of citizens in governance and, broadly speaking, includes the promotion of social movements and their claims to services as rights, see Fung and Wright (2001); Gaventa (2006); Isunza and Lavalle (2018).

[34] On the linkages between international accountability and international responsibility, see Grant and Keohane (2005); Bukovansky et al. (2012).

the soft face is closely tied to notions of public transparency and justification, the hard one relates to sanctions and redress. The dominant paradigm for studying public accountability has been Principal-Agent theory. Reflecting the rational-choice approach, this framework describes the chain of power delegation in democracies with 'principals' being citizens and 'agents' being elected officials and public servants (Gailmard 2014). Within democratic theory, Principal-Agent has subsequently led to the study of check-and-balance relations within and outside the state, categorised by O'Donnell (1998) as 'horizontal' accountability, as opposed to the electoral 'vertical' accountability.

Many have since moved away from Principal-Agent approaches towards other understandings that emphasise the socially constructed nature of accountability relations and the power dimensions of how public accountability is negotiated between multiple stakeholders (state officials, citizens, interest groups, political parties, the media, etc.) holding diverse accountability demands (e.g Fox 2007a; Bovens, Curtin and Hart 2010; Berghmans, Simons and Vandenabeele 2017; Nelson, Bloom and Shankland 2018; Isunza and Lavalle 2018). These constructivist contributions highlight how accountability is socially produced with context-bounded expectations of 'right', 'good', 'just' or 'appropriate' public behaviour; of what counts as an account; of whether/when to include the sanctions; and of who to be held responsible (Newell and Bellour 2002; Fontaine et al. 2016). As argued by Newell and Bellour (2002), the construction of accountabilities and the definition of rights and duties that flow from accountability relations is a political process. Demands and responses are relations of power in a state of flux, they are a product of particular historical and material circumstances.

A valuable contribution to this explicitly social and political gaze on accountability is found in the work of Jonathan Fox on *accountability politics*. Accountability politics is a promising conceptual-analytical device to study accountability in/of SSC for three main reasons. First, it goes beyond Principal-Agent models of vertical/electoral accountability and investigates longer and more indirect[35] accountability processes and relations within and around state agencies and bureaucracies.[36] Accountability politics is thus a lens to understand the social foundations of processes of public institutional change, or 'pro-accountability changes' (Fox 2007a, 2).[37] Second, it inserts power at the core of the analysis thus departing from de-

[35] Even among classic political theory scholarship, the relationship between democracy and accountability is also not a direct one. When examining the case of delegative democracies O'Donnell (1998) suggested, for instance, the concept of *horizontal* accountability to capture other control dynamics beyond the electoral one. Likewise Przeworski, Stokes and Manin (1999) argued that electoral competition not necessarily generated public accountability.

[36] Other studies following a similar approach include: Bovens, Curtin and Hart's (2010) study on the European Union institutions; Isunza and Lavalle's (2018) edited collection on 'non-electoral democratic control mechanisms'; Hickey and King's (2016) study on social protection development programmes; Nelson, Bloom and Shankland's (2018) edited collection on the politics of accountability for reducing health inequalities; and Joshi's (2019) edited collection on accountability in fragile states.

[37] Others in the field have also conceptually explored the relation between accountability struggles and reforms. Rached (2016, 318), for instance, argues that despite its omnipresence and ubiquity, accountability has not always been at the 'forefront of public demands for legitimate authority', operating instead at a lower waveband, through inciting reformist initiatives (also Dubnick 2011). This is a point I will come back to in subsequent chapters.

politicised notions of accountability reliant on legal and/or technocratic notions of (good) governance (Newell and Wheeler 2006; Eyben 2008). Lastly, it embraces the multi-directional, multi-scalar and even the material nature of accountability relations, exemplified in descriptors like accountability 'ecosystems' (Halloran 2016), 'webs' (Bovens, Curtin and Hart 2010), and 'regimes' (Isunza and Lavalle 2018; Waisbich et al. 2019), a point to which I will return shortly.

Accountability and the politics of global development

Much of public accountability scholarship is concerned with 'accountability deficits' and how 'to fix' them (Mulgan 2014). Concerns with, but also perceptions of, deficits are particularly acute in the field of development cooperation (Faria 2005; Laporte 2015). Deficits are intrinsically related to how power dynamics play out internationally: the realm of 'governance without government' (Rosenau 1992) and where states' action respond to multiple layers of responsibility and authority and overlapping non-electoral power control regimes (Kahler 2004; Grant and Keohane 2005; Bovens, Curtin and Hart 2010). Notions of deficits are also shaped by the challenges that 'promoting development abroad' bring to establishing who are the stakeholders in this multi-actor, multi-level, accountability relation (Eyben and Ferguson 2004; de Renzio 2016). Deficit imaginaries further result from the nature of the 'development apparatus' and from its improvement practices attempting, while never fully accomplishing, to rend aid practices 'effective' by showing successes and concealing failures (Ferguson 1994; Mosse 2004; T. M. Li 2007; Rottenburg 2009).

Existing academic and policy-oriented knowledge on 'aid accountability' has enlightened different aspects of the issue.[38] This includes research on 'aid relations' and their workings (*who* is accountable, or held to account, *to whom* and *how* 'aid accountability' is enacted or practiced) and on what the polymorphous notion of accountability 'is' and/or 'does' for the field. Across both streams, power-sensitive studies examined how accountability became a policy priority and a sector of intervention for multilateral and bilateral development donors (Hickey and Mohan 2008; Gaventa and McGee 2013; Swedlund 2017) and how development initiatives promoted or undermined accountability in recipient countries (Hickey, Sen, and Bukenya 2014; Fox 2020). Scholars have also studied accountability-related mobilisation by groups affected by aid projects on the ground, particularly large infrastructure ones (Fox and Brown 1998; Goetz and Jenkins 2001; Park 2019).

[38] Due to close connections between academic knowledge and practice in much of the development scholarship (Sumner and Tribe 2008), several scholars have studied development accountability in a policy-oriented way. Drawing on either a policy management perspective or a democratic rights-based perspective, this literature discusses pathways to state and aid accountability, including through policy evaluations and recommendations. For those working within or in conversation with the 'deepening democracy' theory, studies have created increasingly rich lists of enabling factors or conditions under which pro-accountability institutions (state and non-state alike) 'actually manage to limit political power and sanction its abuse' for improved states and 'donors' accountability (Fox 2007a, 11).

Moreover, power-sensitive studies have deconstructed 'accountability demand-supply' dynamics in the field. They demonstrated how aid organisations (bilateral and multilateral) have prioritised 'upwards' (to other governmental bodies in donor countries) over 'mutual accountability' between partner governments and over 'downwards' accountability to two almost irreconcilable categories of citizens: 'taxpayers' in donor countries and the 'poor and marginalised people'[39] in recipient countries (Eyben and Ferguson 2004; also Chapter 3). They also noted that, when considering 'downwards accountability', donors have prioritised 'taxpayers' over the 'poor aid beneficiaries' who are not only spatially distant from the policymaking settings to demand justification but also problematically disempowered to ask for any justification, creating a so-called 'broken feedback-loop' (Eyben and Ferguson 2004; McGee 2013). In this thesis, I build on these power-sensitive studies, highlighting the relational and polymorphous material and discursive nature of accountability and the multi-dimensional productive work accountability does in the field.

A norm, a tool, a discourse and an arena of conflict

Accountability is first a *norm* and, more specifically, an international 'soft norm' (Paulo and Reisen 2010) ruling *Aidland* since the 2000s. As a norm, accountability works, albeit always imperfectly, as 'global standard' or a 'governance-object' (Dunn 2005; Acuto and Curtis 2013) and functions as a boundary-making, disciplining, ranking and hierarchisation device (Towns and Rumelili 2017). The accountability norm is constitutive of what scholars referred as the 'donorship model' or 'doxa' (Lancaster 2007; Esteves and Assunção 2014): the set of standards and social expectations on donors. In other words, DAC's own *acquis communautaire*. Countries in the 'donors club', are expected to provide concessional resources to promote development abroad, engaging in 'gift-like' spending targeting beneficiaries abroad (Eyben 2008). This commitment was formalised in the 1970s at the UN-level with an agreement by 'advanced countries' to make efforts to provide 0.7% of their GNI as ODA (Clemens and Moss 2005; Vanheukelom et al. 2012).[40] Donors are also expected to untie aid (from the condition to be used to procure goods or services from the provider); to report aid flows according to DAC statistics; to participate in peer-reviews; and to follow Aid Effectiveness principles. Conceiving accountability as a global norm also helps understanding the subsequent emergence of global and national transparency and accountability policy and institutional reforms in donor and recipient countries and the creation of countless tools 'to make aid accountability work' (Honig and Weaver 2019), a topic I will explore in Chapter 3.

[39] For a critical discussion on the notion of the 'poor' and the challenges of using this framing for thinking politically and achieving the fuller goal of social justice, see Hickey, Sen, and Bukenya (2014).

[40] The idea of a target was first mentioned in 1958, as a proposal by the World Council of Churches, and at the time it was of 1%. UNCTAD took the idea forward in the 1960s, providing background studies and suggesting figures around 0.75% of GNP. The Pearson's Commission report in 1969 further drawn the attention to the target, suggesting instead the 0.7% of the GNI. In 1970, the UNGA adopted without vote a declaration on the Second Development Decade which included the agreement on advanced countries making the effort. While in the 1970s the target was an estimate of development assistance needs, for the time, in the following decades it became a political international standard and a commitment by traditional donors. More recent agreements in the context of Agenda 2030 include a commitment by developed countries to provide the equivalent of 0.15–0.2 % of their GNI in the form of ODA for least-developed countries (LDCs) in greatest need (Alsayyad 2020). See https://www.un.org/ldcportal/commitments-regarding-oda-to-ldcs/ (access 26/08/2020).

This leads to a second conceptualisation of accountability in IDC, this time as a *tool*. Accountability tools—including transparency and accounting systems, project and flow databases, project reports, impact evaluation reports, monitoring and evaluation matrices, Theories of Change, LogFrames and beyond—have been studied as *mechanisms* (Joshi and Houtzager 2012; McGee 2013), *infrastructures* (Jensen and Winthereik 2013) and *artefacts* (Mosse 2011; Eyben et al. 2015).[41] Accountability tools, we are told, respond to different aims and pushes from multiple actors and thus create different—and sometimes competing—accountability lines, logics and 'sociotechnical imaginaries' (Jasanoff 2015). Some are social measures of quantitative performance or statistics, while others are management tools. Some aim at creating reporting systems on aid financial flows to external accounting bodies, others at fostering project/activity documentation practices towards citizens in donor and recipient countries. Some are embedded in technology-solutions of open data, while others are technology-free solutions for organisational learning. Most are several of those things at the same time.

While certain development scholars have studied tools and mechanisms to provide policy-relevant analysis of how to improve them,[42] others have investigated their sociopolitical effects (e.g. Rottenburg 2009; Eyben et al. 2015), notably the connection between accountability tools and the surge of neoliberal New Public Management-based forms of audit control and 'governance by/through numbers' or 'measurementalities' (Porter 1995; J. Scott 1999; T. Mitchell 2002).[43] A more recent stream of critical scholarship has also examined the ways tools have evolved embedded in 'techno-emancipatory' conceptions of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and infused with the idea that technology can free information and empower real or imagined publics to control development actors (Jensen and Winthereik 2013; McGee 2013; Narayanaswamy 2015). Constructed to 'create accountability', tools are seeing as connecting different partners into the larger reporting chain and allowing for data on cooperation projects, financial flows, and outcomes to move upstream. Aid data, as I once heard during an international development conference in India, defies gravity: it goes up.

While assessing tools in action, scholars described widespread perceptions of aid accountability tools having 'delivered too little' and 'not worked' in practice (Eyben 2008; Laporte 2015; T. Kim and Lim 2017). At the same time, scholars also described aid organisations becoming hostages of a technocratic thinking that takes for granted the 'fixing' powers of accountability mechanisms (McGee 2013; Jensen and Winthereik 2013). By focusing on 'getting tools right', aid practitioners overlooked the (intended and unintended) effects of

[41] An alternative concept equally mobilised in the critical development literature is one of 'dispositif' (J. Ferguson 1994; T. M. Li 2007).
[42] On this policy vein, see, *inter alia,* Carothers and Brechenmacher (2014); Renzio (2016); Honig (2020).
[43] In his work, T. Mitchell uses the concepts of 'cauculability' (2000) and 'economentality' (2009) to refer to the need the development apparatus has to fund things that are measurable.

accountability 'technical-fixes' on North-South asymmetries and on marginalising partners in the South, both governments and their citizens (Llanos 2019), a point I develop further in Chapters 3.

In sum, conceiving accountability as a (governance/governmentality) tool offers a window into the materiality of processes and instruments used to manage relations, assess results and generate evidence, as well as into the co-evolution of social and organisational practices in the field. It also allows for investigating the negotiations that informed the construction of these instruments (from open-data platforms to independent oversight bodies), including how multiple actors engage to define standards, the judgements about whether the standards were respected, or not, and the particular kinds of authority and different accountability logics underpinning them (Berghmans, Simons and Vandenabeele 2017; Sovacool, Naudé Fourie and Tan-Mullins 2019).

Third, accountability is also a *discourse*, as demanding and providing accounts are examples of 'language in action' (Dermot 2009; Dubnick 2014). As a discourse, accountability is understood as serving different actors to both govern and contest development cooperation relations. Accountability discourses, on the one hand, produce socialisation and discipline effects (through 'naming and shaming', stigmatising and peer pressure) on actors in the donor-recipient dyad and within the 'donor club' (S. Kim and Lightfoot 2011; Swedlund 2017). On the other hand, accountability discourses work as claim-making tools for 'aid recipients', external and internal policy 'reformers' (Fox and Brown 1998; Bebbington 2006; Honig and Weaver 2019), activists in global 'aid monitoring movements' (McGee 2013; Jensen and Winthereik 2013) and domestic constituencies in both donors and recipients seeking to contest and change development cooperation policies and practices.

As a norm, a tool and a discourse, accountability operates as a 'global assemblage' (Ong and Collier 2005), shaping material, collective and discursive relationships in field. At the same time, I contend, it operates as a discursive-politics *arena* where several types of policy and political debates and disputes unfold and where different actors negotiate development cooperation relations and practices. Arenas are spaces of interactions between actors involved in negotiations and deliberation (or non-deliberation) that punctuate the conduct of public policies, from agenda-setting to implementation (Fouilleux and Jobert 2017). Arenas are also spaces where compromises over polices are generated and updated. Arenas of conflict over accountability in/of SSC, or SSC accountability politics, are thus generative of broader policy and political arenas where debates and disputes about SSC unfold and where SSC as a policy field is constantly negotiated and constituted.

Accordingly, when tracing disputes over accountability in/of SSC, this thesis will simultaneously deal with what I label here *narrow* and *broad* accountability politics. The former are the arenas of conflict over whether and how public officials publicise and justify their SSC policies and actions. *Narrow* accountability politics

encompasses substantive disputes over authority and control as well as procedural disputes over how powerholders do/practice accountability.[44] As for the latter, these are the arenas of conflict over SSC-related policy options and public action. *Broad* accountability politics encompass both procedural and substantial disputes over SSC and foreign policymaking. [45]

Accountability in South-South cooperation: the state of the debate

So far accountability has received insufficient attention in SSC scholarly literature. For my literature review, I found only one published academic paper attempting to conceptualise accountability in SSC and a few empirically-oriented studies discussing SSC accountability through single case studies, notably regarding Brazilian and Chinese initiatives (see below).[46] Yet several critical SSC studies, despite not focusing on SSC accountability *per se*, contain valuable insights on accountability-related sociopolitical disputes broadly defined. In this section, I review these contributions pointing to the gaps I intend to fill with this thesis.

Paradigmatic 'accountability crises': the case of ProSavana

Few other SSC initiatives have been as extensively critically scrutinised as ProSavana: a trilateral agricultural development cooperation programme between Brazil, Japan and Mozambique that ran between 2009 and 2020. ProSavana is one of the few Brazilian SSC initiatives that faced a strong civil society opposition on the ground backed by a strong transnational coalition (see Chapter 7). ProSavana, has drawn a lot of attention of SSC scholars working on Brazil, Mozambique and/or agricultural development, and several of them have included accountability-related reflections in their broader analysis.[47] So far there is neither equivalent among Indian initiatives nor among the—often mentioned but less systematically analysed—controversies around Chinese investments in Africa. Below I discuss two scholarly studies on ProSavana that explicitly examined the initiative through accountability lenses.

In '*ProSAVANA and the Expanding Scope of Accountability in Brazil's Development Cooperation*', Cabral and Leite (2015) discuss the cross-regional civil society mobilisation contesting ProSavana as a landmark for

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[44] My use of 'substantive' and 'procedural' here draws on Isunza and Lavalle (2018)'s discussion of non-electoral democratic accountability mechanisms, which they refer to 'positive' and 'negative' controls, based on Isaiah Berlin's Two Concepts of Liberty.

[45] When discussing non-electoral democratic accountability mechanisms, Isunza and Lavalle (2018) employed a similar differentiation, which they refer to 'positive' and 'negative' controls, based on Isaiah Berlin's Two Concepts of Liberty.

[46] Few studies had the term 'accountability' in their title, abstract, and/or keywords. Multiple bibliometric searches using *Scopus*, until March 2020, returned six entries for the combined search with the key-words 'accountability' and 'South-South cooperation', only two of which had the term 'accountability' in their titles and key-words.

[47] Examples include Pierri (2013); Cesarino (2013); Santarelli (2016); Cabral (2016); Shankland and Gonçalves (2016); Milhorance and Bursztyn (2017); Durán and Chichava (2017); Funada-Classen (2019), among others (see Chapter 7).

accountability politics in Brazilian SSC and Brazilian foreign policy. Their paper shows how in the mid-2010s, the 'ProSavana crisis' fed into growing attention of Brazilian domestic actors to SSC in the country and contributed to generate new accountability dynamics and new policy dialogue channels, at least for a short-period. They also argue that the 'ProSavana crisis' made it more difficult for the Brazilian government to sustain, discursively and in practice, that the country had no national development cooperation policy and operated on the basis of the SSC demand-driven principle. This tension between SSC institutional consolidation dynamics and its guiding principles is central to contemporary SSC accountability politics, not only in Brazil but also in India and China, as I will show in subsequent chapters.

Horn's (2018) paper, entitled '*Accountability and Ownership in Brazil's Development Cooperation: The Case of ProSavana in Mozambique',* uses this same initiative to critically engage with official claims that SSC promotes greater development cooperation 'ownership'. From a rights-based development approach, she highlights the disjunctions and tensions between different 'lines of accountability'. She founds that in the case of ProSavana, the absence of explicit political conditionalities failed to increase recipient's ownership. Alternatively, Mozambican decision-makers merely acted as facilitators for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and the interests of the business sector, which in the long run weaken domestic political accountability for agricultural transformation and create new forms of economic dependency in Africa. Horn further suggests that increased ownership should not be limited to greater agency and negotiating space for recipient governments (responding to the pitfalls of the donor-led model) rather it should include the rights, representation, and welfare of affected communities (responding to less state-centred conceptions of development cooperation).

Notwithstanding the richness these studies bring to the table, there is still a knowledge gap on the different accountability politics shaping Brazilian SSC beyond this paradigmatic case. There is, moreover, little understanding of how other forms of disputes around accountability in/of Brazilian SSC relate to the legacies of the ProSavana crisis as well as to the sociopolitical dynamics that unfolded in Brazil since 2015, something this thesis aims to examine.

Unaccountable South-South relations? The case of China's development cooperation

Studies on accountability in/of China's SSC are less geographically and thematically concentrated, with the most insightful contributions being Mohan's (2014) chapter *'China in Africa: Impacts and prospects for accountable development'*; Laporte's (2017) chapter *'Emerging Donors on the Field: A Study Case of China and South Korea in Lao PDR'*; and Yeophantong's (2020) paper *'China and the Accountability Politics of Hydropower Development: How Effective are Transnational Advocacy Networks in the Mekong Region?'*. Each of these studies is discussed below.

A central contribution of Mohan's chapter is his argument that, despite China's non-interference principles, country's engagements have strongly relied on 'inter-elite brokerage', a model that often bypassed domestic

channels of debate and accountability in African partners. As such, Chinese engagements had multi-layered and uneven effects on governance, politics and accountability dynamics in Africa, depending on the types of African states.[48] The author also claims that impacts might not be always 'anti-development' or 'undermine democratic governance' and are subjected to new forms of negotiations, as a result of increased African agency (and subnational politics) and of civil society mobilisation. Mainly concerned with impacts on the ground, his chapter says very little, however, about SSC accountability politics within China and how Chinese stakeholders conceive and act upon these issues when doing development in Africa.

Laporte's (2017) chapter features another study of dynamics on the ground, examining socio-environmental norms, safeguards and practices ruling externally-funded hydropower projects in Laos. Looking at a different geographical setting, her contribution provides a two-layered comparative analysis between emerging and OECD-DAC providers and between two 'Asian providers': China and South Korea.[49] She argues that Southern providers are challenging established international development finance socio-environmental norms, but doing so in non-homogenous ways and not necessarily promoting a normative 'race to the bottom'.[50] Laporte offers two hypotheses for the relation between the integration of socio-environmental norms into emerging powers' investments: first, socialisation pressures from 'traditional' donors and, second, the bargaining power of the other Southern partner and its own interest/will to push for standards to be respected by development partners/loan-granters. While echoing growing scholarly work on recipients' agency in South-South exchanges (e.g. Mohan and Lampert 2013; Dye and Alencastro 2020), an uncharted territory in her analysis is again the role played by domestic factors (actors, institutions and their interplay) in the 'emerging donor', something this thesis hopes to illuminate.

Yeophantong's (2020) study also focuses on China dam-building in the Mekong region. Assessing transnational pro-accountability mobilisation in the context of China-funded/built projects, she argues that civil society activism has elevated hydropower development in the region into a 'exigent social and environmental problem' (ibid, 103). Yeophantong argues that transnational mobilisation has the potential to shape Chinese-builders' (both policy banks and state-owned-enterprises) practices on the ground, and in some cases has succeeded to halt projects. Local mobilisation, she argues, also provides an opportunity for Chinese actors to learn how to operate overseas, based on increased awareness of the political and reputational risks of projects going wrong. An important contribution of this study is to underscore the mediation and brokerage role played by local groups in Mekong countries that have decided to act as 'insiders' not completely alienating local governments and Chinese investors, a point to which I will return in Chapter 7.

[48] In Mohan's typology, African states were clustered as: 'pariahs', 'illiberal with weak democracies' and 'democracies with diversified economies'.
[49] Her empirical study enriches the earlier conceptual and normative discussions on 'Eastern/Asian donors' (e.g., Paulo and Reisen 2010; S. Kim and Lightfoot 2011; T. Kim and Lim 2017).
[50] This nuanced argument is also found elsewhere (e.g. Zimmermann and Smith 2011; Waisbich and Borges 2020).

Attempts to conceptualise South-South Cooperation accountability

The last and more conceptually ambitious contribution is the paper by T. Kim and Lim (2017), entitled *'Forging "Soft" Accountability in Unlikely Settings: A Conceptual Analysis of Mutual Accountability in the Context of South-South Cooperation'*. This paper discusses the prospects for the emergence of a 'SSC accountability regime' and argues for a 'soft' version of *Aidland's* 'mutual accountability principle' (see Chapter 3) to be applied to SSC. The authors based their proposition on the 'differentiated nature' of SSC: its principles (horizontality, non-interference and mutual benefits), the nature of SSC modalities (mainly, technical cooperation and development finance for infrastructure-building), and Southern countries being 'unlikely settings' with distinct political regimes, political systems, domestic accountability mechanisms and strong non-interference foreign policy principles.

For Kim and Lim, a 'softening' of the accountability principle is needed to escape from an alleged 'politicisation problem': the fact that accountability politicises development 'while Southern partners work together for solidarity and common goals' (ibid, 185). According to them, there is no need to 'politicise SSC' because its guiding principles already solve the underlying problems that made accountability a prominent issue for ODA in the first place. Related to this last point, the authors claim that 'aid mutual accountability' is not only a Western concept but also a tool used to weigh down local partners and buck-pass on development interventions failures.

Their conceptual proposition is therefore based on a 'minimal approach to mutual accountability' (ibid, 198-199) that focus on responsibility rather than enforceability, since SSC is not 'institutionally mature' (ibid, 197), and is voluntary-based and responsive to local conditions in Southern partners. For the authors, this tailored approach can work for SSC modalities such as technical cooperation because trust among partners is high (due to clear mandates and to the idea of mutual benefits) and interventions do not require performance assessment as resources invested are low. As for infrastructure-building, they argue, Southern countries have already shown strategic concerns with 'minimal' accountability, such as safeguards to prevent financial and reputational risks.

Kim and Lim's contribution has both potential and shortcomings. The authors are among the few scholars characterising accountability in SSC thinking with the grain. They critically engage with Western (universal) conceptions of development cooperation accountability, offering conceptual alternatives, and engage with widely acknowledged shortcomings of 'mutual accountability' in *Aidland* (see Chapter 3).[51] Their reflection on the relationship between certain SSC modalities and the accountability challenges they generate is also insightful. However, their proposition is infused with over-essentialising and acritical tropes regarding

[51] An epistemic effort that also echoes longstanding epistemic postcolonial critiques, including the more recent wave of global/non-Western IR (e.g. Acharya and Buzan 2019; Tickner and Smith 2020).

Southern providers and SSC. It relies, for instance, on a simplistic characterisation of domestic contexts and state-society relations in the South and on presumed identical 'mutual expectations' Southern countries have when cooperating. Their study also fails to incorporate existing scholarly work on forms of public responsibility, control and regulation and on formal and informal, sanctioned and no-sanctioned, forms of public accountability in non-Western settings, including in authoritarian and/or fragile contexts.[52]

As this review shows, academic knowledge on SSC accountability remains incipient. Despite growing policy debates on rising powers' non-conformity with existing ODA norms generating accountability 'challenges' or 'deficits' (see Chapter 3), and while other aspects of SSC have been met with greater understanding, and even appreciation, few have tried to systematically study or conceptualise accountability in/of SSC. It is true that critical SSC scholarship has not completely overlooked issues of accountability in/of SSC. This includes discussions on SSC *transparency* (e.g. Mawdsley, Savage and Sung-Mi 2014; Sears 2019), on *rights-based SSC* (e.g. Mawdsley 2014a), on citizen *participation in SSC* mostly in BRICS countries (e.g Marcolini 2014; Mawdsley and Roychoudhury 2016; Pomeroy et al. 2016; Milhorance and Bursztyn 2017), and on the impacts of China-Africa engagements on democratic *governance* in Africa (e.g Bräutigam 2009). Yet few studies have explicitly approached the topic—mostly focusing on Brazil and China—but still within a narrow geographic and thematic concentration. This array of studies provides important but insufficient basis to understand how accountability is conceived, practiced and disputed in SSC. Existing studies are also ill-suited to inform policy-relevant discussions on what accountability mechanisms are being operationalised for SSC, under what logics, responding to what kind of demands, something this thesis also hopes to illuminate.

Conceptual framework

In this final section I delineate the integrative conceptual framework guiding this study. Following a qualitative and grounded approach, I have acted as 'researcher-bricoleur' mobilising concepts to make sense of the ideas contained in my empirical data (Corbin and Strauss 2008). The proposed framework brings together, in an eclectic and interdisciplinary manner, different approaches from critical development studies, foreign policy analysis and critical accountability studies.

Integrative frameworks have been used to counter the insufficiencies of single approaches and offer nuanced accounts of the complexity and multidimensional character of certain social phenomena, including policy processes. In this thesis, it bridges the discursive dimensions of accountability politics (i.e., policy and political debates and the knowledge controversies around whether and how to account for SSC

[52] See, for instance, Stromseth, Malesky and Gueorguiev (2017); Isunza and Lavalle (2018); Joshi (2019).

initiatives and their results) with its sociopolitical effects (i.e., the creation of arenas of conflict and tools where a range of actors dispute the meanings and practices of SSC globally and domestically in key Southern providers). Such framework takes seriously the growing concerns within critical development studies to integrate discourse and politics more consistently (Li 2007; Leach and Tadros 2014; Cabral 2016) while enabling analytical connections between discourses and politics across different scales and geographies.

Politicisation of South-South cooperation: problematisations of and negotiations over accountability

In dialogue with the multidisciplinary scholarship on SSC and development accountability presented above, here I orient my examination of current disputes over accountability in/of SSC through the combined notions of *problematisations* of and *negotiations* over accountability and their relation to the unfolding *politicisation* of SSC in rising powers like Brazil, China and India.

Problematisation is the first thread guiding the investigation of how disputes over SSC accountability emerge. By mobilising this notion, I ask: how is accountability in/of SSC rendered problematic? What kinds of SSC accountability problems are publicly formulated and by whom? The concept of problematisation has been extensively employed by development scholars since the 1990s, largely inspired by Michael Foucault's work on governmentality. Besides working as a method for critical inquiry (see Bacchi 2012; Barnett 2017), the notion of problematisation has been deployed as the socially constructed discursive operation through which development issues are made visible as problems in being made into target for governmental (development/aid) interventions. James Ferguson's seminal book *The Anti-Politics Machine* (1994) is perhaps the first articulation of this argument.[53] Examining aid interventions in Lesotho, Ferguson suggests that 'development institutions' generate their own forms of discourse that problematises (under)development. Development discourses, he proceeds, create a structure of knowledge around objects and countries to be developed therefore justifying interventions. Development organisations are not interested in analysing the political and structural causes of poverty. They make countries, like Lesotho, 'with all right deficiencies' (ibid, 70) candidates for apolitical and technical interventions, that only the 'development apparatus' can provide. According to Ferguson, these interventions generate the expansion and entrenchment of bureaucratic state power, while denying its politics. Development becomes—intentionally or unintendedly—the 'anti-politics machine'.[54]

Tania Li's book *The Will to Improve* (2007) follows Ferguson's work and also examines development problematisations, which to her relates to 'how problems come to be defined as problems in relation to particular schemes of thought, diagnoses of deficiency and promises of improvement' (ibid, 264). Crucial

[53] Others include Escobar's (2012), Roy's (2012), Roy and Crane's (2015) discussions of global poverty; Mitchel's (2002) work on expertise and techno-politics in Egypt; and Li's (2007) work on improvement schemes in Indonesia.

[54] Further critiques, such as Huber and Joshi (2015) work on dams in the Himalayas extend this analysis emphasising the intentionality of the state in promoting anti-politics interventions.

to her analysis is how 'certain kinds of problems and solutions become thinkable whereas others are submerged' (ibid, 386). In her study of 'improvement schemes' in Indonesia, she describes two interrelated practices present in development programmes: 'problematisation' and 'rendering technical'. In Li's work, problematisation functions to 'identifying deficiencies that need to be rectified' (ibid, 7), while 'rendering technical' is the set of practices to rend intelligible the domain to be governed and improved.

These two ethnographic contributions are essential starting points to examine the 'problematisation' of accountability in SSC. They suggest paying attention to discourses of (lack of) accountability that render both accountability in SSC (and SSC as a whole) problematic and thus a target for technical 'improvement' interventions by a range of governments and development experts. Their work allude to the importance of examining the social effects of discursive problematisations of accountability, conceiving them as 'narratives in action and interaction' (Leach and Tadros 2014, 242). In particular, they offer tools to reflect on the sociopolitical conflicts that emerge from accountability problematisations and their simultaneous de-/re-politicisation effects. This argument is more clearly formulated by Li when arguing that, while the 'anti-politics' interventions by experts had multiple socioeconomic effects on people's lives,[55] rather than making local groups abject or depoliticised, development schemes have 'awakened people's critical sensibilities', creating opportunities for subjects to mobilise, assert their claims and resist (ibid, 91).

Drawing on this idea of simultaneous instances of 'closures' and 'openings' generated by the development machine—and here by the problematisations of SSC accountability—in this thesis I move further away from classic governmentality notions of problematisation as de-politicisation (or 'anti-politics') by bringing in other usages of the concept coming from political sociology and policy studies. In widely applied middle-range policy theories such as 'agenda-setting' or 'issue-formation', the notion of problematisation is used to describe the formation of 'policy problems' (Sabatier 1988; Kingdon 2013). Likewise, in social theory it speaks to the formation of 'social/public problems' and to the sociopolitical processes through which social issues are made public and acted upon (Bourdieu, Wacquant and Farage 1994). In his book *The Public and its Problems*, Dewey (1927) suggests that problematisation occurs when awareness-building and collective action are fostered by those who are not directly affected by a particular problem hence constituting a 'public' around it. The problematic situation becomes a socially visible 'public problem' whereas state's further recognition of a public problem renders it a 'political problem' (Cefaï 1996, 14).

Both the policy and sociological approaches highlight the role of social interaction in generating meanings and forming debates, discussions or disagreement over 'problematic' issues and over their resolution.[56] Particularly useful here is how these approaches combine the formation of 'public problems' (in the realm

[55] Among the effects, Li mentions privatising land, forming capital, forging wage labour, creating mobility and migration.

[56] An understanding that is close to what the sociologist Jürgen Habermas named the 'public sphere' and to Fouilleux and Jobert's work on 'arenas', mentioned above.

of public affairs or government) with notions of 'public', 'publicisation' and 'politicisation'. These frameworks allow for examining different stakeholders (political leadership, parties, political coalitions, business actors and civil society), their expectations of state development-related actions and ways to justify it and the unfolding debates and discussions on SSC and SSC accountability problems they engage in. They enable, moreover, investigating the formation of public problems around SSC and SSC accountability as constituting and being constituted by the formation of 'SSC publics': different social actors—similar to 'stakeholders' or 'constituencies'—more or less directly impacted or affected by SSC interventions.

When juxtaposing the governmentality and the sociological lenses one immediately notes their opposing views on the relation between problematisation and politicisation. While in Foucault-inspired studies problematisation is the very discursive operation through which a situation generates de-politicisation, in the pragmatist and policy accounts problematisation is conducive to politicisation, as issues are made object of public debate and collective action by social actors and by the state. Rather than underplaying these diverging assumptions, I take them as a central issue to my own reflections on SSC accountability, suggesting that, rather than an either/or situation, problematisations of accountability can have both de- and re-politicising effects in the field of SSC.

The second thread is *negotiation*, which functions in the integrative framework as a descriptive-analytical concept to capture agency and political action in the field of SSC. The idea of negotiation prompts interrogations about the actions, practices, behaviours and the types of interaction and bargain between distinct SSC actors in different 'arenas of conflict' over accountability. Negotiations are both processes and outcomes of emerging disputes over SSC accountability. Looking at SSC accountability negotiations means engaging with three interrelated dynamics, namely: negotiations of development cooperation accountability; negotiations of development; and negotiations of foreign policy.

Due to the relational nature of accountability, the notion of negotiation helps unpacking disputes over how development actors justify their development cooperation actions and how these have shaped the construction of particular types of mechanisms over time. This approach is found, for instance, in Berghmans, Simons and Vandenabeele (2017) study of accountability of INGOs. Their study highlights the multiplicity of stakeholders demanding accountability from INGOs (final beneficiaries, taxpayers/donors, watchdogs and so on) and the mutual negotiations between them. It also shows how each accountability demand is embedded in particular *relationships* sustained by particular accountability *logics*[57] and how these logics create different kinds of *instruments*[58] for INGOs to give account and be held accountable. A similar

[57] In their study of INGOs, the different accountability logics at play are: governmental control; means for the principal to verify the agent has fulfilled the contract; demonstrating to peers; responsiveness; cooperation and democratic dialogue; indirect and transparency-generated; and market-like dynamics of competition and supply-demand.

[58] Their social understanding of accountability instruments draws on the instrumentation approach developed by Lascoumes and Le Gales (2007), where public policy instruments are a 'condensed form of knowledge about social control and ways of exercising it'.

point is made by Sovacool, Naudé Fourie and Tan-Mullins (2019) in their analysis of the evolution of the World Bank oversight body: the Inspection Panel. Their study shows how the Panel changed, since its creation in the mid-1990s, according to internal and external pressures and competing interests and expectations of stakeholder groups (borrowing states, donor states, management, the development NGOs community and local communities affected by projects). Such an account of the internal and external negotiations shaping the functioning of the Panel is a rich illustration of the plurality of expectations shaping negotiations over accountability mechanisms in global development.

Negotiations also illuminate how development is disputed and agreed upon in the context of SSC. Scholarship is abundant on political economy and actor-centred studies examining negotiations in development cooperation, either in the form of 'developments encounters' at the project-level or negotiations of aid relations and partnerships (e.g. Long and Long 1992; Mosse 2005; T. M. Li 2007; Rottenburg 2009). Here I draw more specifically on the latter. In *The Development Dance*, for instance, Swedlund (2017) looked at 'North-South aid negotiations' as policy bargains (over amount of aid, technical control and policy influence) between aid agencies and recipient governments, between aid agencies and their own governments and among governments themselves. Despite admittedly overlooking the intra-state and domestic politics, Swedlund's book delineates different types of negotiations taking place around expectations on the amount of aid and delivery by 'donors' and the specific policy actions and reforms by 'recipients'. His argument is also interesting in what it connects aid negotiations and accountability issues, stating that 'aid commitment failures' on both sides explain the search for new and more effective ways (he calls 'fashions') to deliver aid, such as the 'ownership' and 'budget support' turns, that are 'more easily measured and enforced' (ibid, 14; also Chapter 3).

In the past decade, studies on SSC have also examined issues of negotiations between emerging powers and their cooperation partners, mostly in Africa, either through the lenses of 'encounters on the ground' (e.g. Cesarino 2014; Taela 2017; Chuanhong Zhang et al. 2019) or through the lenses of partners' agency. Mohan and Lampert's (2013) paper on China-Africa relations offers an early rendition of the agency by 'less-developed partners' in negotiating South-South relations, featuring African business and political elite shaping China's presence in the continent and examples of 'subnational politics' (Mawdsley 2012a) and local resistance, for instance by local manufacturers against Chinese traders. Many others have unpacked what it means to be negotiating (with) rising powers in the context of SSC, since, examining agency at the intergovernmental level (e.g Alemu and Scoones 2013; Laporte 2017; Moreira 2020) and negotiations involving the private sector (e.g. Chen 2018; Dye and Alencastro 2020) and civil society (e.g. Durán and Chichava 2017; Milhorance and Bursztyn 2017). Attention to agency in/by the other Southern partner, therefore, helps locating accountability negotiations within political negotiations happening between local actors and rising powers. These negotiations also remind us that accountability norms and tools are

constantly negotiated on the ground, at a project level, as seen in the case of China's dam-building in the Mekong region, mentioned above.

Finally, negotiating SSC accountability is about negotiating foreign policy.[59] Using critical IR and Foreign Policy Analysis lenses, SSC accountability-related negotiations can be thought an interplay between domestic and external sources of foreign policy behaviour. Examining foreign policy negotiations, means, on the one hand, observing *inter-state* SSC accountability negotiations and inserting development cooperation negotiations within *geopolitical* bargains where Brazil, China and India negotiate (notably with existing powers) the terms of their international engagements in an autonomous, non-subordinated, way (Narlikar 2013). On the other, negotiations are also taking place *within* emerging powers, in the context of increasingly distributive foreign policymaking[60]. Here negotiations happen along the axes of *bureaucratic politics* and *state-society relations* on whether SSC is an appropriate strategy and who gains and who loses with SSC initiatives internally (Hill 2003; Nel and Van der Westhuizen 2003; Milani and Pinheiro 2013; Alden and Brummer 2019).[61] Hence, looking at the SSC accountability politics through the prism of foreign policy negotiations allows simultaneously for identifying arenas of diplomatic geopolitical and/or epistemic conflicts around SSC accountability and for tracing the bureaucratic and state-society disputes embedded in foreign policymaking dynamics within large SSC providers.

Global and domestic arenas of conflict: actors, spaces and accountability lines

A last aspect of the conceptual framework relates to my choice to study politically salient[62] forms of accountability politics taking place across global and national scales; a decision I justify in methodological terms in Chapter 2. This explicitly multi-scalar kaleidoscopic gaze on the politics of accountability conceive actors problematising and negotiating accountability in/of SSC as an assemblage of stakeholders (citizens across the South-South dyad, other Southern governments, traditional development partners, global

[59] Negotiation is a classic subject in international affairs. The notion of negotiation adopted in this dissertation goes beyond classic IR realist inter-state negotiation paradigms, based on 'rational-choice models' and their successive iterations, but also beyond the initial attempts to discuss the domestic sources of foreign policy, such as the consolidated 'two-level game theory', developed by Putnam (1993).

[60] The distributive effect of any public policy can refers to who wins and who loses from certain governmental course of action (Sefton 2008). International scholars have extensively discussed the particularities of foreign policy in what it delivers in terms of distributive (or even redistributive) effects and in how citizens perceived the distribution of benefits (M. R. S. de Lima 2000; Hill 2003).

[61] See Faria and Belém Lopes (2019) for a discussion of the heated bargains between those immediately in charge of Brazilian foreign policy and a range of governmental and non-governmental actors within the so-called 'Brazilian foreign policy community'—a concept widely applied by scholars looking at public opinion and foreign policy issue in Brazil (e.g. Faria 2008; Almeida and Guimarães 2017)—during the Workers Party era (2003-2016) on the appropriateness of PT's South-South strategy (see Chapter 5).

[62] The notion of 'political salience' has been used in political science in different ways. This includes the studies on the political salience of culture and identity in politics (see Posner 2004) or the scholarship on electoral behaviour describing issues that matter politically for voters. While often more quantitative-based, this latter stream bears a close relation to the notion of 'issue salience' in more classic qualitative scholarship on policy problems and agenda-setting, connecting salience with visibility in policy dynamics. My own operationalisation of political salience, as well as visibility, in this dissertation draws on this last stream of work.

development policy communities, etc.) with their own demands and expectations on what 'appropriate' SSC provider behaviour is or should be and on how SSC providers should justify their acts and deeds.[63] It sees SSC accountability dynamics, therefore, as embedded in complex multi-level, multi-layered and multi-actors governance systems, along a 'domestic-international continuum' (Milani and Pinheiro 2013).

In an attempt to apprehend this complex landscape, I suggest that 'arenas of conflict' over SSC accountability crosscut domestic and transnational citizen struggles, domestic foreign policy politics, and global geopolitical and epistemic disputes. In the *geopolitical* realm, SSC accountability politics interact with material and symbolic disputes, including over international status and recognition, in the field of development cooperation and in international affairs, more broadly. For *development knowledge politics*, SSC accountability politics relate to disputes over knowing and counting SSC to control it and over Southern agency to negotiate and dispute meanings and ways of measuring development cooperation. As for the *domestic politics of foreign policy*, SSC accountability interacts with unfolding SSC domestic foreign policy politics, materialised in particular institutionalisation bureaucratic disputes within the state and in accountability claims 'from below', from civil society, in their interaction with the state and its international development role.

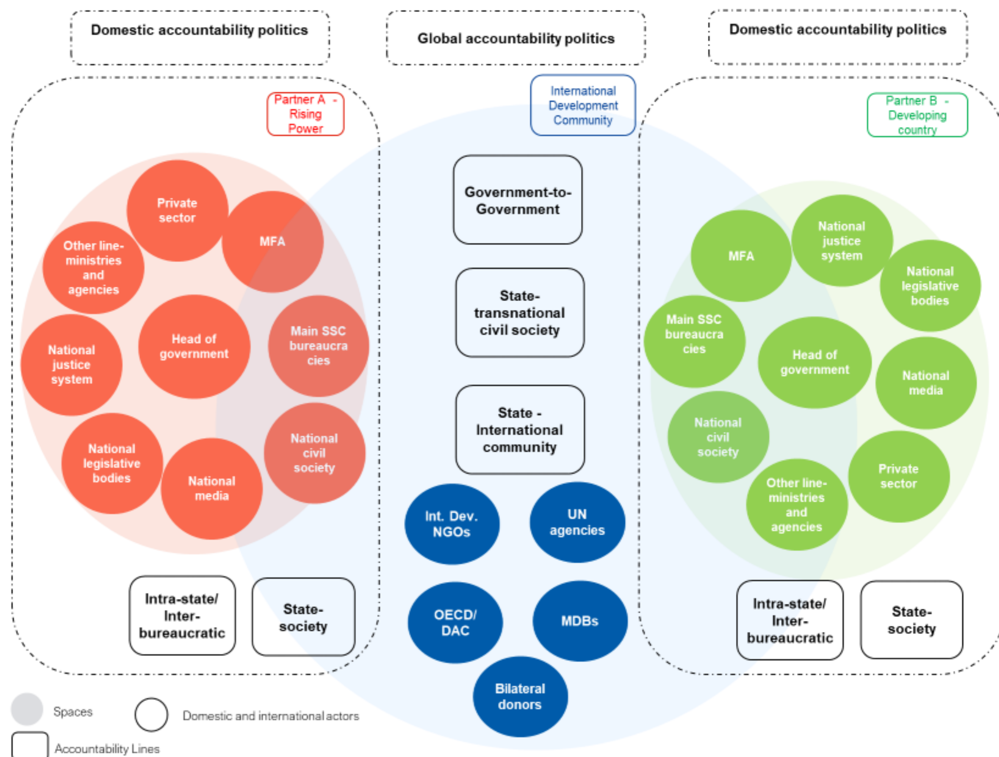
Attentive to the 'international-domestic nexus' in SSC dynamics (van der Westhuizen and Milani 2019), or to what Manning (1977) called the *intermestic* politics, and to the interplay between international and domestic forces in constituting accountability-related ideas, policies and governance instruments (A. Gupta 2012; Prashant Sharma 2014), this thesis unpacks, in a relational way, global and domestic forms of SSC accountability politics. Attention to *global SSC accountability politics* responds to need to apprehend transnational debates, conflicts and negotiations over SSC accountability. 'The global' here means, first, the trans-national geographical scale and the locus where certain types of problematisations of and negotiations over SSC accountability unfold and materialise.[64] Second, the inherently trans-national manifestations of SSC accountability politics that refer to negotiations between Southern providers and a range of external actors (state and non-state) around roles, responsibilities and actions beyond national borders. Analytically, I understand global SSC accountability politics as both external/international context influencing SSC accountability politics domestically[65] and the site of production of transnational SSC accountability dynamics.

Domestic SSC accountability politics, conversely, is the different ways in which domestic actors dispute and negotiate understandings of SSC and SSC accountability and how to practice, in contexts where SSC is a

[63] Citizens' struggles have been a major focus for scholarship on accountability politics and development (Newell and Wheeler 2006; Fox 2007a), including in SSC (Cabral and Leite 2015; Yeophantong 2020).
[64] A similar take on the 'transnational' as a level of analysis for contentious politics is found, for instance, in the social movements' scholarship. See, for instance, Tarrow (2001; also Chapter 7).
[65] See Hickey, Sen, and Bukenya (2014) for such a conceptualisation of 'transnational politics of development'.

policy field in consolidation, and often a sub-set of foreign policy. This conceptualisation locates the unfolding disputes in what scholars call the domestic politics of foreign policy (Hill 2003; Ratton Sanchez et al. 2006; Milani and Pinheiro 2013) and the domestic politics of aid and SSC (Lancaster 2007; Veen 2011; van der Westhuizen and Milani 2019). SSC accountability debates and the negotiations taking place domestically are shaped by existing foreign policy and SSC policymaking dynamics (and its visibility and political salience in domestic politics and public debates), the national policy and public management styles, the patterns of state-society relations and the electoral and non-electoral democratic control mechanisms to discipline and dispute country's international footprints, led by the executive power. These factors play out in context-specific ways across SSC providers, as I discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. Figure 1, below, is a heuristic depiction of my approach to investigating accountability politics in SSC through coexisting spaces, actors and accountability lines.

Figure 1 - Diagram of South-South cooperation accountability politics



Source: author's own elaboration

Finally, a combined attention to global and domestic forms of SSC accountability politics recognises that these are processes informed by transnational policy and normative mobilities that do not possess a logic and/or internal rationality (T. Mitchell 2002) and cut across political territories in complex ways and 'form unique hybridizations and creolizations in different settings' (A. Gupta 2012, 106). More importantly, it recognises that particular domestic manifestations depend on local conditions of possibility and

embeddedness in national social-political structures (political-bureaucratic fields, subnational institutions, national issues, etc.) that translate global forms on a daily basis (Risse-Kappen 1994; Acharya 2004; Clarke et al. 2015; Savage 2019).

Conclusion

This chapter located my research topic at the intersection of two multidisciplinary research fields, namely SSC studies and accountability studies, and introduced my conceptual framework to critically investigate SSC 'accountability politics in time'. As stated, this thesis examines SSC as a sub-set of global development practices and a policy field under construction within a group of prominent SSC providers and builds on the idea of a current consolidation phase of SSC characterised by a series of policy and institutional reforms. This moment is marked by disputed institutionalisations where accountability politics constitutes a window into the increasing contested nature of SSC globally and within large SSC providers. The study of SSC accountability politics helps thus to understand the growing politicisation of SSC, the underlying sociopolitical processes that make SSC a contentious issue, and the emergence of multiple global and national 'arenas of conflict' around it.

The proposed conceptual framework relies on two major conceptual threads: *problematisation* and *negotiation*. Examining *problematisations* of accountability in/of SSC help unveiling the discursive dimensions of accountability politics and the ways different actors understand SSC accountability as a government and/or public problem to be acted upon. Tracing problematisations allows for understanding the emergence of accountability as an issue in/to SSC, the identification of the different actors and their understandings of accountability, and the re-/de-politicising practices that unfold. Additionally, when tracing *negotiations* over accountability in/of SSC I seek to describe the interactions and the exchanges between those in charge of SSC initiatives and the multiple stakeholders disputing who, whether and how powerholders justify SSC flows and practices and how they justify acting as a Southern development partner. By empirically mapping unfolding problematisations and negotiations of accountability in/of SSC, this thesis highlights three interconnected dimensions shaping SSC policies and practices: geopolitics, development knowledge politics, and foreign policy politics (both bureaucratic politics and state-society relations) thus offering a kaleidoscopic gaze into contemporary SSC politics along the domestic-international continuum and across emblematic SSC providers.

Chapter 2. Research methodology

This chapter describes the research design and research process adopted in this thesis. In the sections to follow I first present the methodological strategies devised to study accountability politics in South-South cooperation. I then move to the methods employed for data collection and data analysis. Appendix 3 features an extended note on my positionality as researcher-practitioner in *SSC-land*.

Methodological strategies

This thesis prioritised an inductive, empirical-based, qualitative approach to examining accountability in/of SSC. Drawing on the grounded theory approach (Corbin and Strauss 2008), three interlinked methodological strategies were adopted. First, a multi-sited mapping of contemporary forms of SSC accountability politics. Second, a process-tracing of SSC accountability-related disputes and the policy and/or institutional reforms they generate in global and domestic SSC policy spaces. Third, a transnational relational comparison of accountability politics in three emblematic SSC providers: Brazil, China and India.

Mapping accountability disputes

The first methodological strategy employed was to map different forms of accountability politics in contemporary SSC, using Brazil, China and India as main empirical sites. To support the mapping exercise, I relied on approaches developed by Science and Technology Studies (STS) scholars when mapping sociotechnical, scientific and political *controversies*[66] as well as on *object-tracing* approaches adopted by political geographers and political ethnographers studying global phenomena.

Mapping strategies have proved to be useful for scholars grasping the multi-relational and diffuse nature of international accountability in cases as diverse as the European Union (Bovens, Curtin, and Hart 2010), climate governance (Rached 2013) or INGOs (Berghmans, Simons and Vandenabeele 2017).[67] Here, the value of mapping is two-fold. First, to identify the *multiple forms* through which SSC policies, their outcomes, and how governments explain both are discursively problematised and debated nationally and globally. Second, to illuminate emerging SSC accountability *sociotechnical assemblages* (and the actors, spaces, tools and competing accountability logics that comprise them), working with dynamics 'on the move', still not

[66] *Cartographie de controverses*, in French. See https://controverses.sciences-po.fr/index-3.html (last access: 25/07/2020). This approach was first developed by Bruno Latour and other colleagues to study sociotechnical controversies. It has been expanded since also to what Rennes (2016) calls 'political controversies': those where actors problematise and publicise a situation or project as entailing (in)justice and general interest issues.

[67] As well as for scholars studying domestic development issues (Newell and Wheeler 2006; Dewachter et al. 2018).

stabilised, closed or 'black boxed' (Venturini 2010, 258). Albeit not all SSC accountability disputes fit the category of 'controversies' in the original sense employed by STS scholars,[68] their approach is valuable to identify emerging arenas, institutions and actors where negotiations over SSC take place; the issues emerging in public/policy debates; and the positions different actors hold (Venturini 2008; Rennes 2016).

Alongside mapping SSC accountability debates, I have drawn on the growing body of work on global assemblages (e.g. Ong and Collier 2005; Rankin 2011; Tsing 2015) and on the transnational circulation of policy ideas, instruments and programmes (e.g. Hassenteufel 2005; Peck and Theodore 2015; Porto de Oliveira 2017) to trace accountability as an *object*. This meant following simultaneously the thing, the actor, the policy and the conflict to trace the ways accountability—as an idea, a discourse, a global norm and a tool—travels across geographies.

Process-tracing

The second strategy adopted was process-tracing of disputes and unfolding negotiations over SSC accountability. Process-tracing is a methodological approach defined as the use of heuristic case studies to inductively generate new hypotheses (Bennett 2004). Here, process-tracing enabled to closely follow politically salient social-political processes generating different forms of accountability disputes in SSC, the negotiation dynamics unfolding, and their sociopolitical consequences, including eventual policy-institutional changes or reforms.

The process-tracing started with and relied on the mapping to retrieve, first at the discursive (or policy debate) level, the coexisting narratives and storylines (Roe 1994; Hajer 2005) and problematisations of SSC accountability. However, the process-tracing did not end at the discursive level and sought to look for the effects and sociopolitical implications of accountability narratives. In other words, to trace, first, how SSC accountability debates emerge and how ideas of accountability are negotiated; second, how debates eventually drive public interventions and shape how governments do/practice accountability in SSC; and third, how disputes over SSC accountability contribute to de-/re-politicising SSC.

Together the mapping exercise and the process-tracing led to the identification of different global and national discourses and political-policy dynamics around SSC accountability, even when discourses, debates and disputes were not openly or exclusively framed by actors themselves as being about *SSC accountability*. Combining the two strategies was also a way to respond to the epistemic challenge of navigating discourses and politics within the loose global and domestic 'regimes of SSC' (Cesarino 2013; Milani and Duarte 2015; also Appendix 1). Unlike ODA, SSC has no single institutional locus where debates are taking place—what

[68] According to Rennes (2016), political controversies can be differentiated from other types of political debates (including polemics) based on a range of features or properties, including polarisation, structured argumentation by actors, continuous/reiterated exchanges, and publicity.

a SSC expert once called 'SSC homelessness'[69]—and therefore requires the researcher to follow multiple research tracks in order to make sense of the political significance of certain spaces, moments and events across time. A detailed account of how I have operationalised these two methodological strategies can be found in Appendix 2.

Transnational relational comparison

As a third strategy, this thesis relied on a transnational relational comparison, using Brazil, China and India as main empirical sites for data-gathering and analysis. The multi-scalar and multi-sited nature of the inquiry aimed not only at revealing the domestic-transnational connections shaping accountability politics in a defined set of key Southern providers, but also at allowing for the three countries to function as repositories of exemplary SSC accountability politics and sites for inquiring on the 'dialectical relationships between shared and distinctive experiences, between common dilemmas and specific responses' (Hill 2003, 46).

Geographical, anthropological and policy research are attentive to scales, mobility and relationality in policy-related phenomena (e.g. Marcus 1995; Ong and Collier 2005; Xiang 2013; Peck and Theodore 2015; Robinson 2016). This thesis draws upon this scholarship to capture the multiple dynamics through which different forms of accountability politics are produced and negotiated at global arenas as well as domestically in key SSC providers. Such research design engages with the growing concerns in comparative public policy, foreign policy analysis and critical SSC research with both 'methodological nationalism' and 'methodological globalism' (Clarke et al. 2015; Bergamaschi, Moore and Tickner 2017; Peters 2018). To study simultaneously Brazil, China and India is also an attempt to simultaneously avoid the Western-centric bias that take SSC providers as an 'unaccomplished copy' of DAC donors (Muhr 2016) and the Non-Western bias that either essentialise Southern/Non-Western identities as necessarily different or use 'Asian powerhouses' as the only sources of 'alternative sites' for conceptualisations (Alden and Brummer 2019; also Appendix 1).

Multi-scalar analysis, or the act of scaling up and down and jumping across scales, enables the identification of 'different languages, rhetorics, ideals, justifications and rationalities' around accountability in SSC that circulate at different scales and are mutually constitutive (Gould 2004 cited in Clarke et al. 2015). Seeking to avoid macro and micro-reductionisms, this analytical gaze aims to understand how conflicts around SSC and SSC accountability in one particular context are shaped and constituted by both relations of interiority and exteriority (Dittmer 2014; Savage 2019). At the same time, *multi-sited analysis* enables the development of transnational relational comparisons as to assess how competing global and domestic pressures play out and shape emerging forms of accountability politics and policy and institutional changes across SSC providers. Relational comparisons, as suggested by Marxist geographers and scholars in urban and policy

[69] This expression was coined by Luara Lopes, from the Brazilian think tank Articulação SUL (personal communication with Luara Lopes, 2019).

mobility studies (e.g. A. Roy 2012; Robinson 2016; Hart 2016), bring different geographies 'into the same frame of analysis, as connected yet distinctively different nodes in globally interconnected historical geographies – and as sites in the production of global processes in specific spatio-historical conjunctures, rather than as just recipients of them' (Hart 2016, 373).

Hart's approach to comparisons, in particular, explicitly challenges hierarchies opposing Western (ideal-types) forms to other deviating-variant, 'less modern', ones.[70] This is both methodologically and conceptually important when using Southern providers as empirical sites, as implicit or explicit comparisons with Northern/'traditional' donors are at the heart of SSC and SSC accountability politics. Such approach is also coherent with decolonial and 'anti-orientalist' lenses that avoid comparing Southern state formations, policy processes and notions of public accountability to an imagined Western past. Rather such lenses focus instead on comparing Southern political formations to understand processes 'in the South and from the South' (Sabaratnam 2011; A. Gupta 2012). Hence by relying on a transnational relational comparation this thesis avoids converging (modernising) explanations for the rise of accountability debates in SSC while being attentive to variations across Southern polities.

Brazil, China and India

Brazil, China and India are paradigmatic Southern providers and undoubtedly the most widely studied ones.[71] Materially speaking, they feature among the largest SSC providers, China above all. Ideationally, there is wide recognition that these countries are important forces behind the shifting geographies of development cooperation. As 'SSC protagonists' (De Bruyn 2019), these countries face greater domestic and external scrutiny of their global development footprint and thus constitute appropriate sites to investigate emerging SSC accountability politics.

Notwithstanding the commonalities there is great variation among the three countries. Differences are found in the domestic realm in terms of sociohistorical and political configurations, including political regimes and policy styles, but also in their international identity, status and diplomatic stances vis-à-vis the so-called international liberal order. Although the three countries have historically exhibited a 'non-status quo' foreign policy behaviour, both China and India are characterised as 'global players' or 'revisionist states' while Brazil fits the category of 'rising middle-power' or 'regional power' (Narlikar 2013; Leveringhaus and De Estrada 2018; Milani 2019). Moreover, Brazil was historically less overtly a Third

[70] Hart (2016) differentiates her proposition from other existing comparative strategies, in particular Charles Tilly's 'encompassing comparison' holding onto conceptions of world-history that relied on notions of a common generative processes and strong diffusionist assumptions.

[71] Among the three, China is the most studied, followed by Brazil, and lastly India (Chaturvedi 2012). For critiques on the over-focus on BASIC countries in SSC scholarship, see Muhr (2016); Bergamaschi, Moore and Tickner (2017); Haug (2020).

World champion (Cervo and Bueno 2002).[72] China and India, on the contrary, have more openly advanced their non-Western/Eastern credentials, besides having been historical Third World leaders, even if the legacy of non-alignment is less consensual in contemporary Indian foreign policy circles.[73] Identity issues, as argued in Chapter 4, are central to rising powers' global development engagement and shape the contours of the geopolitical disputes around SSC accountability.

Differences are also found in how Brazil, China and India engaged in development cooperation in the past and re-emerged in the early 2000s: their public narratives on development cooperation,[74] their definitions of SSC, the modalities and instruments employed and their positionality vis-à-vis the OECD and the DAC.[75] Normatively, Brazil has kept a 'safe distance' from the OECD while strategically engaging with the organisation and with the DAC. In 2016, the country requested membership of the OECD[76] and today occupies a middle-position (like Mexico and Turkey) between 'DAC-philos' and opposers.[77] Meanwhile, India has traditionally adopted a more resistant position towards the OECD and the DAC and China a very pragmatic one (Abdenur 2014; Pal 2014).[78] Their participation in triangular cooperation arrangements with 'traditional' donors also differs, with Brazil more invested in this modality than the other two (Paulo 2018; Milani 2019; D. Zhang 2020).

As for their profile as development partners, while Brazil made technical cooperation and capacity development on agriculture, social and health sectors the core of its SSC, both India and China have strongly emphasised a mix of economic cooperation, infrastructure-building and technical cooperation applied to productive sectors (Chaturvedi 2012; Leite et al. 2014; Chenoy and Joshi 2016; Gu, Chen and Haibin 2016). Even if priorities remain in flux, differences have political implications and gave birth to what

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[72] During the Cold War, the country adopted what Ambassador Fonseca Jr. (1998) calls a 'specific non-alignment' combining Third World positions and active championing of development issues at the UN (Dauvergne and Farias 2012) with loyalty to Western values. Brazilian law professor and former Foreign Minister Celso Lafer (2001-2002) once defined Brazil as 'an "Other West", a poorer and more problematic one, but still the West' (Lafer 2000 cited in Faria and Belém Lopes 2019). The very tension between alignment and autonomy (vis-à-vis the West and mostly the United States) has been a major tension in Brazilian foreign policy since the 19th century (Cervo and Bueno 2002; Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007).

[73] See, for instance, Khilnani et al. (2012) for a call to a return to a 'non-alignment 2.0' and Hall (2016) and Miller and Sullivan de Estrada (2017) on 'multialignment' and 'pragmatism' under Narenda Modi.

[74] According to Lauria and Fumagalli (2019, 3), a public narrative is 'the way donor countries present themselves to other donor countries, receiving countries, international organizations, and their citizens'.

[75] It is important, nonetheless, to recognise the differences between Brazil, China and India's engagements with OECD, broadly speaking, and with the DAC, in particular. While stances towards the DAC have been mostly critical and cautious, the three countries have expanded their dialogue with the OECD in the last decades on issue such as tax reform, anti-corruption, and others, in more or less formal capacities (Pal 2014). Likewise, all three countries are active members of the un-orthodox OECD Development Centre.

[76] The OECD bid is still unclear, as the organisation has not formally initiated the membership ascension process due to internal disagreement among current members on enlargement issues and on Brazil's candidature in particular. For an early analysis on the bid, see Esteves, Waisbich and Belém Lopes (2017).

[77] According to Casarões (2020), the cooperation agreement between the OECD and Brazil, in 2015, can be read as a sign of status downgrading, with Brazil moving away from its previous position of 'key external partner', together with other emerging economies, to a position of aspiring member alongside other 'middle-sized' states, like Colombia and Argentina.

[78] A similar analysis of the three countries, based on a broader survey of several international issues and realms, is found in Narlikar (2013).

some call the 'Latin American/Asian SSC divide' (Chaturvedi 2018) and the 'soft/hard SSC divides' (NeST 2019).

There are finally differences in how cooperation is operationalised. Due to the technical nature of most Brazilian SSC, its 'national ecosystem for SSC' (IsDB/South Centre 2019) is comparatively more dispersed than the one in India or China's, even if fragmentation is a feature of all three systems. Despite having a cooperation agency since 1987, Brazil's SSC is inhabited by more than a hundred public bodies in the implementation side, making institutional and individual agency particularly relevant to understanding decisions on accountability-related tools or their absence. India's cooperation agency, the MEA-affiliated DPA, was created in 2012, whereas China's agency, CIDCA, was set-up in 2018.[79] Both China and India follow a 'business-friendly' approach to their SSC and thus the business sector is an important part of the accountability dynamics. The participation of business actors is less preponderant, while not absent, in the case of Brazil (Chenoy and Joshi 2016; Gu, Chen and Haibin 2016; Dye and Alencastro 2020).

Focus on Brazil

While seeking to understand an ensemble of interconnected SSC accountability politics and their similitudes and differences, my study does not offer, as in a classic 'intra-class comparison' study (Sartori 1991), a methodological symmetrical, side-by-side, comparative assessment of dynamics in the three countries.[80] Rather I use Brazil as a main site for analytical insights. The main implication is that Brazilian SSC domestic accountability politics are analysed in more in-depth ways than the ones in India and China. The limitations of data are compensated, nonetheless, by the quality of the interpretation and by the added value of having all three countries examined in a relational way.

Working comparatively unavoidably brings conceptual and methodological questions. The first one being the appropriateness of having China as a research site. Working with China did pose methodological challenges of research access and language barriers and analytical challenges to work with variance in political regimes. Rather than ignoring these issues, my well-pondered choice to include China responds to a recognition of its undisputable relevance as a Southern provider and its importance in shaping the direction of travel of global development politics. I further justify this choice in two complementary ways. Methodologically, China features in the analysis of global SSC accountability politics but less significantly so in the cross-country analysis of domestic dynamics, for which I have relied more on Brazilian and, to a lesser extent, on Indian-related data. Conceptually, while recognising the importance of political regimes in

[79] While both ABC and DPA are formally subordinated to Brazil's and India's ministries of external affairs, respectively. The creation of CIDCA was an attempt to centralise functions until then then split between the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has elevated China's SSC system from a government department under MOFCOM to a vice-ministerial central state agency under the State Council.
[80] See Peck and Theodore (2015) study for a similar non-symmetrical design.

shaping SSC accountability dynamics in each country, studying China is consistent with the proposed characterisation of accountability politics as a lens onto the disputed nature of SSC and the recognition of multiple 'accountability regimes' currently shaping the actions of SSC providers.[81] As such, the Chinese case allows for exploring forms of non-electoral accountability politics—such as bureaucratic and geopolitical—and provides the most different case along a continuum of more open polities, like Brazil and India.

Additionally, working with rather than shying away or dismissing regime variance is consistent with the task of assessing SSC 'accountability politics in time'. For China, this means factoring-in country's 'gradual shift towards a polity adapted to an increasingly complex and pluralist society' (Ho 2007, 188) and inquiring what it means to the possibilities that domestic and external actors currently have to engage and question political authority regarding China's role in the world. As for Brazil and India, it means looking at shifts towards less pluralistic configurations, if not de-democratisation, and what they mean for notions of how the power to promote development at home and abroad is exercised and contested.

I end this section reflecting on the limits, the trade-offs and the incompleteness of the proposed research design. My focus on comparing Southern powerhouses, due to their size and prominence, is one among other possible approaches, including focusing on different SSC partners within a region, on (former) socialist states or on comparing different legal codes and bureaucratic forms. Additionally, my findings are necessarily limited by the choice to study multiple forms of accountability politics in more than one jurisdiction rather than narrowing-down to one single country or project. Lastly, I recognise the epistemic limitations of my findings in two additional ways. First, because observing selected sectors, institutions or initiatives 'cannot provide knowledge of the state by analogy or extension' (A. Gupta 2012, 53). Second, because I am necessarily bounded by the challenges of apprehending SSC dynamics in flux and recognising the time-bounded nature of SSC accountability politics mapped out in this thesis (see Appendix 3 for an extended reflection).

Data collection and data analysis methods

The thesis relied on a set of qualitative data collection and data analysis methods. Data collection efforts were limited to contemporary SSC dynamics. The year of 2015 was used as an approximate landmark due to the multiple international development agreements agreed upon, around that time, notably the Agenda 2030 and the Paris climate agreement, and their impact in the field. The year of 2015 is also a relevant

[81] This is also in line with more recent scholarship on accountability beyond liberal democratic regimes, mentioned in Chapter 1, including those studying transparency, participation, non-electoral democratic controls and publicity-based/internet-driven accountability in China (G. Yang 2006; Distelhorst 2012; Stromseth, Malesky and Gueorguiev 2017; Isunza and Lavalle 2018; Chatelard, Audin and Daniel 2018; H. C. Li 2019).

marker for the current consolidation moment of SSC. In Brazil, this period coincides with the beginning of the political-economic national crisis and with the end of the Workers' Party (PT) rule following the divisive impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in 2016, which have deeply affected the trajectory of Brazilian SSC activism and exchanges (see Chapter 5 and Appendix 3). In India, Prime Minister Narenda Modi (BJP), started his first term in 2014 and his personal foreign policy agenda is seen as greatly impacting on Indian development footprint abroad (Chenoy and Joshi 2016). Significant discursive and policy shifts also took place in China around this time. Under Xi Jinping (in power since 2012), China's foreign policy became more assertive and the country expanded its commitments to global development (SIC PRC 2019). This includes the launching of the all-encompassing BRI, in 2013, and China's increased engagement with the UN development system both multilaterally as well as through triangular cooperation (D. Zhang 2017; Mao 2020).

Methods

This study employed a mix of qualitative field and desk-based data collection methods, namely: (1) documentary research; (2) semi-structured and informal interviews; and (3) participant observation.

In the documentary research, I analysed national and international policy documents using official governmental and non-governmental sources and media reviews.[82] While doing so, I relied on textual approaches and discourse analysis, paying attention to 'floating signifiers': ideas that can be granted different interpretations and proliferate during dislocation and/or before the new hegemonic discursive order is established and meaning becomes temporarily fixed again (Cabral 2016).[83]

I also extensively relied on field-based research. Figure 2 presents my fieldwork timeline and the visits made to my research sites between 2017-2020.[84] The timeline makes clear the multi-sited nature of this study as well as my data-collection emphasis on Brazil and on participant observation at SSC-relevant international events, including meetings hosted by the BRICS-led New Development Bank (NDB), the UN BAPA+40 Conference, as well as SSC diplomatic and para-diplomatic political dialogues.

[82] For Brazil, I have mostly used the Portuguese-language *Folha de São Paulo*, *Estado de São Paulo*, *Valor Econômico* and *O Globo*. For India, the English-language *The Hindu, Hindustan Times, Times of India* and *The Wire*. As for China, the English-edition of *Xinhua* and the English-language *The Global Times*.

[83] Others have followed a similar textual approach to the study of power and accountability dynamics in development cooperation, including Ferguson (1994); Li (2007); Dermot (2009); Berghmans, Simons and Vandenabeel (2017).

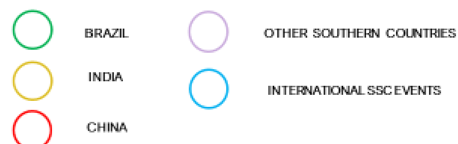
[84] The timeline also indicates my SSC-relevant research experience prior to joining the PhD.

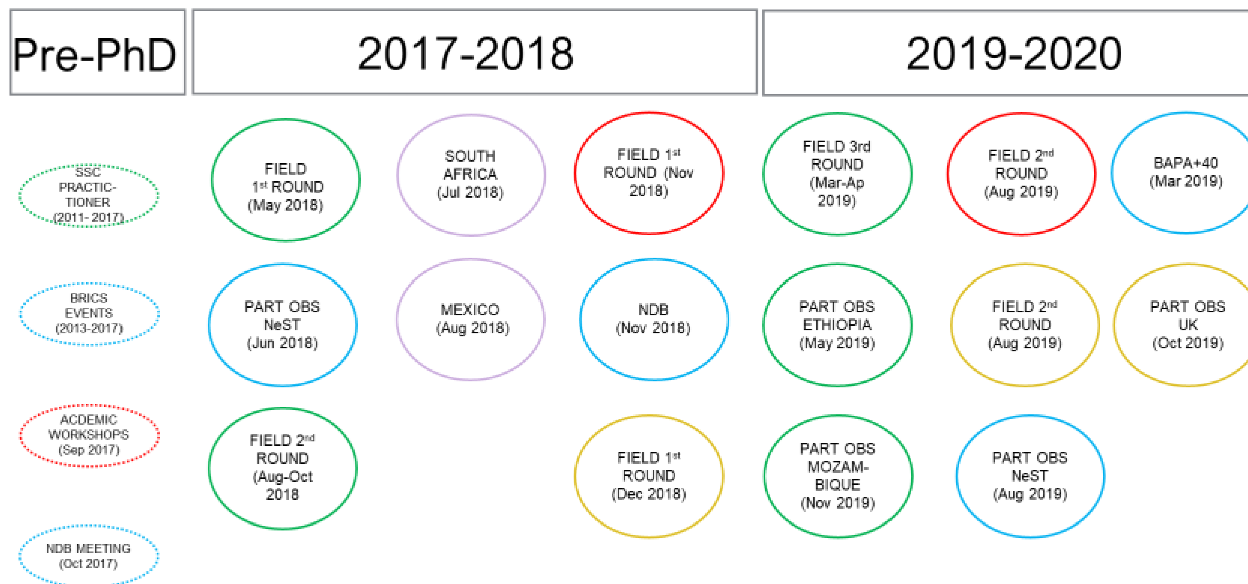
Figure 2 - Fieldwork timeline

FIELDWORK TIMELINE

LEGEND

BAPA+40 = 2nd United Nations High-Level Conference on SSC
FIELD = Fieldwork
NDB = BRICS-led New Development Bank
NeST = Network of Southern Think-Tanks
PART OBS = Participant observation





In total, I conducted 137 semi-structured and informal *interviews* with government officials and civil servants working in what I named here 'SSC bureaucracies'[85], representatives of civil society and academia, and representatives of international organisations working on SSC. These were 'elite interviews' where respondents were chosen because of their position, their knowledge of internal SSC politics, and their role and situatedness regarding SSC policy processes. I combined this initial stratified sampling based on participants' affiliation with snowballing techniques, which led me to additional accountability issues and empirical sites (Jensen and Winthereik 2013). I also relied on ethnography-inspired methods to 'studying up' development organisations (Laura Nader 1972; Rottenburg 2009; Mosse 2011; Eyben 2014) and engaged in informal conversations with research participants, during key-policy meetings or events, and with other relevant social actors throughout my fieldwork.

Figure 3 summarises the distribution of my research participants per country and according to their profile.[86] Interviews were conducted in person, in most cases, or remotely (by telephone or online voice-call) in English, Portuguese, French or Spanish, depending on my respondents' preferences, and recorded when possible. Interviews generally lasted for 90 minutes, although some were shorter and others lasted more than 2 hours. Interviews were analysed with the help of a specialised software for qualitative analysis, *NVivo*. My coding of themes and issues started with Brazilian SSC and transnational SSC-related sources and then moved to the other ones, in a reiterated and mutually-informing manner. In order to protect my participants' identities, and considering the small size of *SSC-land*, both direct quoting and indirect referencing from interviewees were anonymised. Respondents have been assigned codes composed by a country identifier and a random number.[87] Translations of direct quotes into English are my own.

In Brazil, the research participants included representatives from 'SSC bureaucracies' working with policymaking and/or as implementers in line-ministries and other public agencies, representatives of audit institutions, knowledge actors (from academia and think tanks), representatives of civil society, and representatives of international organisations working on SSC in Brazil. In some key institutions, several people were interviewed individually and/or in focus groups. Most interviewees were currently or previously affiliated with governmental institutions (at the senior or mid-level management or as frontline SSC workers) or worked on SSC outside the state (in interest groups and/or academics).[88] My focus on these practitioners aimed at capturing the voices of those who had views on SSC accountability and first-

[85] Drawing upon the 'bureaucratic turn' in development studies and anthropology of aid, I use the term to refer to the state or public institutions— or to the state apparatus, in more Foucauldian terms—in Southern providers that engage in SSC activities as their core-function or as part of their mandate. This includes development cooperation agencies, but also specific departments within line-ministries or other public agency that is involved in SSC initiatives. On 'aid bureaucracies' and 'development organisations', see Rottenburg (2009); Yanguas and Hulme (2015).

[86] A fully anonymised list of my interviews and another of the different institutions represented in my sample can be find in Appendix 4.

[87] BR for Brazil, CH for China, IN for India, OSS for representatives of other SSC providers, and ODP for representatives of other development partners, including governmental representatives from DAC members, the OECD and *Aidland* development experts in academia or civil society.

[88] Many of them transitioned from one category to another either before the start or during my fieldwork.

hand experience with operationalising tools and mechanisms. For the views of the highest political authorities, I relied on official documents, oral presentations in events and media reviews.

My samples for India and China were smaller. In India, my main participants were either affiliated with key SSC governmental institutions or were knowledge actors and civil society organisations (CSOs) representatives, while in China I mostly interviewed knowledge actors and CSOs representatives. While aiming for a certain degree of standardisation across the three countries, based on social position in the SSC field and on functional roles, I have also sought to balance the need to facilitate cross-country comparison and the desire not to undermine the experience of accountability in different contexts. Due to my research focus on the policymaking side in Brazil, China and India, I have conducted fewer semi-structured interviews with representatives from other Southern partners and from 'traditional' donors. Albeit limited their voices are far from absent from my empirics as they were also captured through the media and documental review and during participant observation at SSC events, including in countries such as Mexico, South Africa, Mozambique and Ethiopia (see Figures 3 and 4).

The last method employed was participant observation of national and international events, both governmental and civil society meetings. Drawing on existing ethnographies of aid (e.g., Mosse 2005; Rottenburg 2009; Eyben and Savage 2013; Eyben 2014) and on the growing numbers of ethnographies of SSC (e.g. Cesarino 2014; Shankland and Gonçalves 2016; Chuanhong Zhang et al. 2019; Cheng 2020), I employed a multi-sited ethnographic data collection on national and transnational SSC spaces (see Figure 4). The data retrieved through these observations was triangulated with other sources and complemented with reflections on observant participation at other relevant events prior to 2017.

When conducting this multi-sited project, I had to negotiate different research access and positionalities (see Appendix 3 for an extended discussion). This has facilitated looking at my research topic from a pluriversal way, with no-single locus of enunciation, and with multiple situated knowledges (Haraway 1988). Due to the unevenness of access to the different sites and time spent in the field, the way I mobilise data from the three sites is thus unique to each setting. Such a 'fractal and polymorphous' engagement, echoing Jensen and Winthereik (2013), represents a 'choice of illustrations to invoke the range of empirical settings that indicate the breadth of analytical themes and illustrate different ways to practice accountability' (ibid, 48). This approach is not only coherent with the spirit of transnational relational comparisons but also speaks to the plea made by Kaag and Ocadiz (2019, 82) for a 'kaleidoscopic' approach to study SSC that can 'bring different partial perspectives and knowledge together in order to complement one another for a better and more complete comprehension'. Here I operationalise their call not only at the researcher positionality level, but also at the methodological level, as a commitment to plurality and to partial accounts as ways of knowing the state and state-society dynamics.

Figure 3 - Research participants

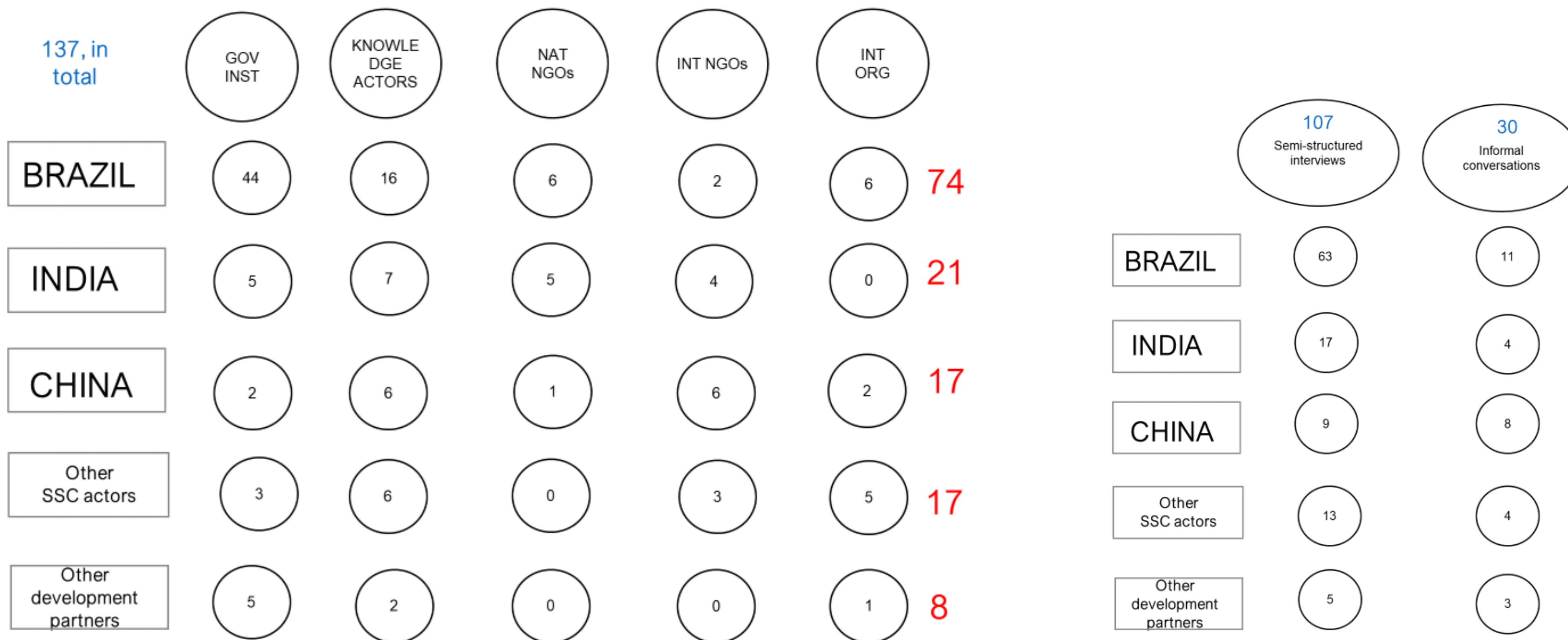
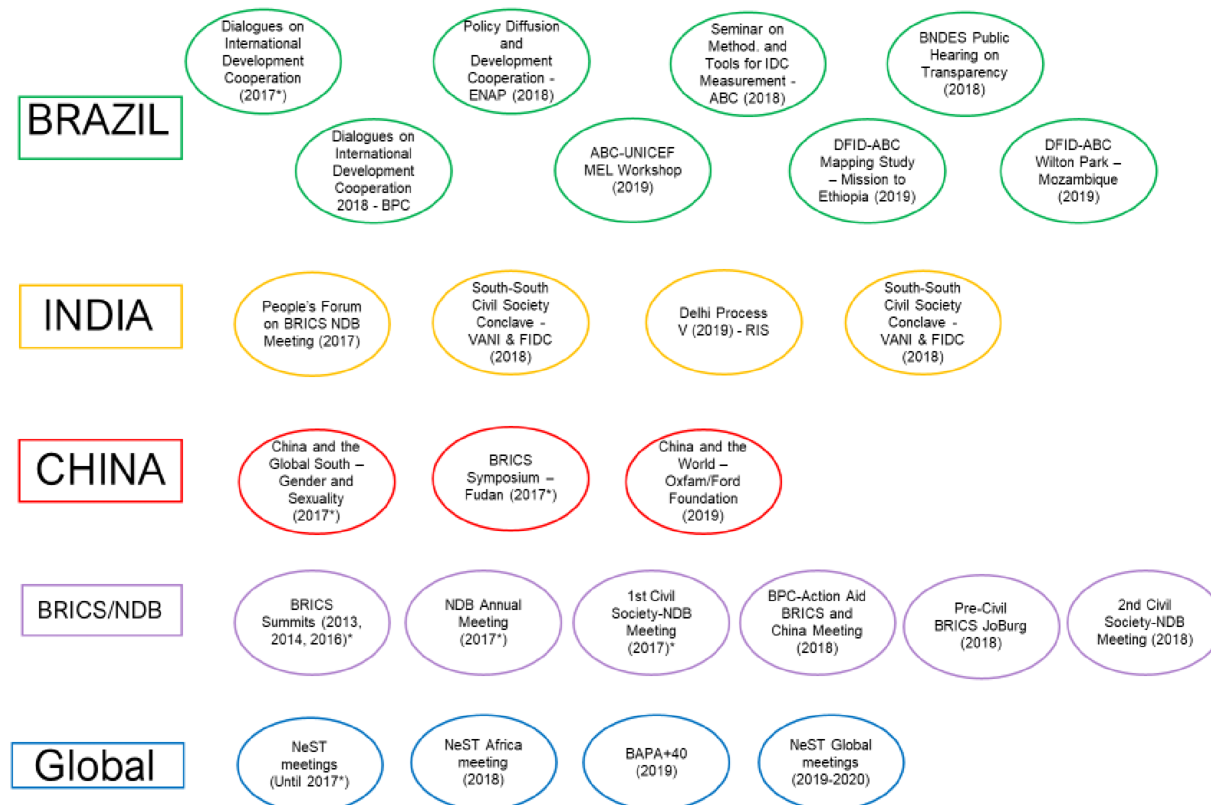


Figure 4 - Event participant observations



Chapter 3. How the 'accountability problem' emerged in South-South cooperation: an historical and analytical overview

In this chapter I discuss the formation of accountability as a *problem* for a set of actors in the global development community and the particular ways this problem was framed and acted upon. This is a deconstruction exercise to set the sociohistorical conditions that allowed for certain conceptions, concerns and particular kinds of accountability-related disputes to emerge in the field. It not only helps 'provincializing' (Chakrabarty 2008 [2000]) accountability dynamics that dominate development cooperation but also renders visible the interplay between the re-emergence of SSC and 'aid accountability' concerns and the interconnectedness of accountability politics in both North-South and South-South cooperation in the recent years.

The chapter is divided as follows. In the first section, I retrace the rise of 'aid accountability deficits' as a problem in the early 2000s, relating it to growing New Public Management (NPM) audit cultures across 'traditional' donor countries and to shifting aid governance and legitimacy stakes. Next, I explore the main 'aid reform' debates that emerged as tentative responses to 'fix' *Aidland* and how accountability concerns were put at its centre, notably in the OECD-led Aid Effectiveness Agenda. The first section ends with a discussion on the proliferation of transparency and accountability tools and on their sociopolitical effects. In the second section, I examine the construction of accountability in/of SSC as a problem, first by traditional donors and existing 'aid monitoring movements' and then by actors in the South, both governments and civil society. I then introduce rising powers' initial diplomatic responses to these external concerns and their use of differentiation claims to first resist and then to find 'Southern ways' to engage and experiment with SSC accountability.

Aid accountability as a problem

While the ubiquity of accountability debates and tools in contemporary global development create the impression that this 'global circulating script' (A. Roy 2012) is a longstanding feature of the field, this is not the case. Signs of a fading optimism regarding ODA and questioning over its purposes and results dates back from the 1969 Pearson Commission Report.[89] Yet it was from the 1990s onwards that accountability attained political and academic salience (Wenar 2006; Riddell 2007; Laporte 2015). Its emergence as an issue and a problem for/in *Aidland*, I contend, is closely related to the politicisation of development cooperation, reflecting ongoing disputes around its purposes and practices.

[89] For a critical analysis of the report at the time, see Jolly (1970).

Throughout its history, different constituencies within and outside *Aidland* sought to contest but also reimagine aid. Questions emerged around how aid was operationalised and how its developmental outcomes were benchmarked against either the (narrow) poverty alleviation focus or the (broader) structural developmental changes and growth in the South (Cassen 1986; The South Commission 1990; Easterly 2006; D. Moyo 2009; Lin and Wang 2017). There were also questions around how taxpayers' money in 'rich countries' was spent in development initiatives in 'poor countries': to what end, who benefited and whether 'poor people in the South' were benefitting at all (Eyben and Ferguson 2004; Yanguas 2018a).

Growing questioning, in academic and policy spaces, as well as in public arenas, set the scene for an identity and legitimacy crisis—a 'donor puzzle' (Esteves and Assunção 2014)—to which the 2008 financial crisis and the re-emergence of SSC contributed to accentuate (Zimmermann and Smith 2011; Eyben and Savage 2013; Yanguas 2018a). This has prompted a wave of normative codification and reforms at the global level and in several bilateral and multilateral donors, leading to what is now known as the 'Aid Effectiveness Agenda'.[90] In what follows, I recount this process in a thematic rather than purely chronological fashion, emphasising the different ways aid accountability was identified as missing and the types of debates, reforms and tools put in place to solve *Aidand's* 'accountability problem'.

Accountability deficits: *unaccountable Southern recipients and aid organisations?*

Unsurprisingly, policy and academic debates largely revolved around aid accountability *deficits*. Concerns escalated since the 1990s in response to the geopolitical changes of a post-Cold War world (Riddell 2007) and to the consolidation of result-based policymaking and audit cultures within the core of the aid system, both in the OECD as well as domestically in some of DAC's most active members (Strathern 2003; Pal 2014; Hadjiisky 2017). Debates mostly revolved around two types of 'problematic accountability deficits': in Southern recipients and in aid organisations.

Development NGOs pioneered the accountability debate in the 1990s, as a self-reflective exercise on their own work and relations with communities they worked on and with (McGee 2013). Around the same time, concerns with and debates on accountability in/of Southern recipients begun to emerge out of donors' mounting prioritisation of the so-called 'good governance agenda'. This multidimensional agenda revolved around fighting poor governance and corruption and 'deepening democracy' in the South, through strengthening civil society and citizen participation in policy processes, as much as reforming the state, budget management and policymaking in recipient countries (Goetz and Jenkins 2005). The World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategies are a telling embodiment of this spirit (Cooke and Kothari 2004; Hickey and

[90] The linkages between crisis and accountability and accountability and legitimacy are not unique to *Aidland*. A similar story has been observed, for instance, in the case of the European Union (Bovens, Curtin and Hart 2010).

Mohan 2008; Gaventa and McGee 2013). There and elsewhere, donors' gradual shift from 'project to budget support' underscored a perceived need to curb recipients' mismanagement of aid in other to achieve 'aid effectiveness' (OECD 1996; Commission for Africa 2005; Swedlund 2017).

Hence, this first framing of the problem—as a Southern recipients' accountability deficit—contributed to strengthen donors' good governance agenda (Carothers and Brechenmacher 2014), entangling both discussions and generating its own set of sociopolitical and governmentality effects. Besides promoting governance reforms in Southern countries,[91] accountability-related aid portfolios of the post-structural adjustment era have themselves created new forms of 'process-based' aid conditionality, whereby current and/or future lending became dependent on performance outcomes and adoption of accountability tools to improve aid management, reinforcing the already asymmetrical North-South dyad (Hickey and Mohan 2008; Rottenburg 2009).

As for development organisations, while marginal throughout the Cold War, concerns with accountability deficits became omnipresent and intrinsically related to understandings of accountability as 'answerability for performance' (World Bank 2003). Development organisations performance, nonetheless, remained an open-concept, meaning either 'value-for-money' or 'effective poverty reduction'/'pro-poor outcomes', and often a combination of both.[92] Concerns with performance also stemmed from the results-based and evidence-based policymaking turn of the last decades (Howlett 2009; Parkhurst 2017), which prompted development organisations to 'demonstrate results based on hard evidence' (Eyben et al. 2015). Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) became a 'best practice' for donors, at least rhetorically (Laporte 2015; Honig and Gulrajani 2018).[93] Additionally, from 2005 onwards, following a growing global open government wave, 'aid transparency' also joined the already diverse array of problematic deficits (McGee 2013; Jensen and Winthereik 2013; Honig and Weaver 2019).

Domestic constituencies and Southern recipients' concerns

Distinct stakeholders within donor countries became important voices in problematising aid accountability deficits and raising different expectations on DAC donors' policies and spending. Under mounting concerns with results-based public action, particularly after the 2008 financial crisis, parliaments, political opposition forces and voices within governing parties called, for instance, for greater 'aid effectiveness' and

[91] Carothers and Brechenmacher (2014) differentiate between three streams of aid initiatives, namely: governance, democracy, and human rights. The authors argue that aid providers typically present and group together the concepts of accountability, transparency, participation, and inclusion in policy documents as an apparently mutually reinforcing set, despite acknowledging their links are only partial.

[92] With countries like the UK being more concerned and aligned with the poverty reduction goal than others like the US (Wenar 2006; Gulrajani and Calleja 2019).

[93] Riddell (2007) points out that, at least at the time of his survey, the majority of traditional donors were only starting to implement evaluations in a consistent manner.

for improving 'aid transparency' to curb aid mismanagement (Yanguas 2018a; Gulrajani and Faure 2019).[94] Concurrently, CSOs in the 'aid monitoring movements' advanced their range of accountability concerns, including the need for greater transparency in the aid sector and for bilateral and multilateral donors to promote citizen-centred development interventions and uphold 'democratic ownership' of aid/development cooperation (Fox and Brown 1998; Jensen and Winthereik 2013). Networks of 'aid watchdogs', such as the Better Aid Coalition or the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness,[95] often called on Northern donors to be accountable not only to domestic taxpayers but also to fulfilling global development goals and targets, including meeting the 0.7% GNI/ODA target and upholding socio-environmental justice in development-related projects (Park 2019).

Other than domestic constituencies, Southern recipients also had their own aid accountability concerns. This included challenging unequal North-South relations and the (lack) of accountability of Northern donors for fulfilling the 0.7% target. Southern recipients also denounced the insufficiencies of the donor-led reformist agenda that overlooked what they perceived as the real development, not aid, effectiveness issues. Much of this critique was formulated between the 2005 and 2008, during the series of OECD-led High-Level Forums and specially in Accra, and found great echo among CSOs (Brown and Morton 2008), as I will discuss shortly.

Importantly, while accountability was perceived as problematic by different stakeholders in various overlapping ways, in the 2000s an 'aid effectiveness' paradigm—concerned with aid performance and with justifying aid expenditures to Northern taxpayers—became the majoritarian global circulating script (Eyben 2008). Though hegemonic, management concerns never fully supplanted other understandings of accountability thus creating a patchwork of globally circulating accountability 'focuses and logics' (McGee 2013). This plurality remains presently visible and reveals different expectations of what accountability should be and do to the field and the kind of reforms needed to achieve it.

Aid reforms and the effectiveness-accountability nexus

The multifaceted reformist wave that engulfed *Aidland* in the 2000s encompassed aid governance reforms, development organisations' transparency reforms and aid agencies management reforms. Combined they have come to constitute the 'Aid Effectiveness Agenda': a self-critique attempt by the DAC to 'fix' *Aidland*, creating new social contracts and compacts[96]—between donors and recipients and between governments and their domestic constituencies—on the purposes of aid and on the benchmarks to assess it (S. Kim and Lightfoot 2011; Eyben 2013; Esteves and Assunção 2014; Swedlund 2017). Accountability had a special

[94] Their criticism grew in the wake of *#AidToo* debates on sexual and human rights abuses in *Aidland* (Yanguas 2018b).
[95] Both networks later merged into the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness. The Partnership was funded in December 2012 to unite CSOs on the issue of effective development cooperation. See https://csopartnership.org/ (last access: 16/10/2020).
[96] For a discussion on social contracts (delegated authority) and compacts (normative authority), see Pouliot (2017).

place in the Agenda and through the successive aid reforms debates in the 2000s both issues—effectiveness and accountability—became closely entangled.

The 'Effectiveness Agenda' was built through a series of DAC-led debates, the so-called High Level Forums that took place in Rome (2002), Paris (2005), Accra (2008) and Busan (2011). A new wave of normative codification resulted from these series of debates, in particular the 2005 Paris Principles on Aid Effectiveness and the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, putting 'mutual accountability' between donors and recipients at is centre.

The Agenda was based on agreed commitments to enhance aid effectiveness and monitoring schemes to make sure compliance was achieved by donors and recipients. To support the 2005 Paris Declaration, the DAC developed a set of 12 indicators to measure progress on aid effectiveness and promote greater mutual accountability (OECD 2005).[97] 'Mutual accountability' was—alongside the principles of ownership, alignment, donor harmonisation and results-focused development—conducive to make development interventions work (see Box 1, below). It was also a meta-commitment, an intended (collective) accountability towards fulfilling the Agenda itself.

Different commentators have since pointed to the shortcomings of this principle. 'Mutual accountability' was resisted by several donors in Paris for being too stringent and costly (Menocal and Rogerson 2006) and, at the same time, perceived by many in the South and in global civil society networks as loose and vague (Eyben 2008; Jensen and Winthereik 2013; T. Kim and Lim 2017). Southern actors further criticised the insufficient commitments from donors, since the Declaration only had one indicator on mutual accountability, namely to create country-level mechanisms in recipient countries (Bissio 2013; Ocampo and Arteaga 2014).

Despite the acknowledged shortcomings, accountability as a principle and a statement was there to stay. After Paris, it became one of *Aidland*'s major meta-narratives in three overlapping ways: first, as an external need for donors to manage their relations with recipients. Second, as an internal governance tool to improve performance and increase the domestic authority and legitimacy of aid organisations. Third, as an international norm to secure the fulfilment of donors' commitments to global development. As mentioned, as time progressed the first and second understandings prevailed over the third one, but not without disagreements.

[97] The background for the mutual accountability principle is the Managing for Development Results initiative launched by the World Bank, the UK DFID and the Canadian CIDA in 2002, at the margins of the Monterrey Conference for Financing (ECOSOC/UNDCF 2012).

Box 1 - Mutual accountability in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005)

> ***Mutual accountability:*** *Donors and partners are accountable for development results*
>
> 47. A major priority for partner countries and donors is to enhance mutual accountability and transparency in the use of development resources. This helps strengthen public support for national policies and development assistance.
>
> 48. Partners countries commit to:
>
> - Strengthen as appropriate the parliamentary role in national development strategies and/or budgets.
> - Reinforce participatory approaches by systematically involving a broad range of development partners when formulating and assessing progress in implementing national development strategies.
>
> 49. Donors commit to:
>
> - Provide timely, transparent and comprehensive information on aid flows so as to enable partner authorities to present comprehensive budget reports to their legislatures and citizens.
>
> 50. Partner countries and donors commit to:
>
> - Jointly assess through existing and increasingly objective country level mechanisms mutual progress in implementing agreed commitments on aid effectiveness, including the Partnership Commitments. (Indicator 12).

The Paris Agenda and its discontents

While the Agenda became a compass for *Aidland*, it did not fully dissipate the criticism that led to its adoption in the first place. From the perspective of Southern actors, the Agenda had two major shortcomings: first, at the procedural level, the DAC, a 'closed space', had decided on the Declaration (Eyben 2013). Second, at the content level, the Agenda focused on means (i.e., aid) rather than on development ends (Bissio 2013). The Paris agenda had, consequently, both input and output legitimacy shortcomings (Taggart 2020). Moreover, by trying to solve the 'donor puzzle' and 'fix' *Aidland*, the Agenda was less about meeting recipients needs and more about making both sides to keep their promises (Swedlund 2017), besides safeguarding donors' legitimacy towards their own internal constituencies (Esteves and Assunção 2014).

Due to its aid-management focus, Paris equally failed to fully incorporate the emerging powers and their differentiation claims as countries to be recognised not as 'Non-DAC donors' but as practicing something different: SSC (Bracho 2017). In the subsequent Forum, in Accra, SSC was recognised in more substantial way, but by then, the geographies of global development were quickly changing. In 2007, another development cooperation space was created at the UN-level, the Development Cooperation Forum (UNDCF), with a mission to debate development (not aid) effectiveness, a point I will return to shortly. Crafted as an inclusive space for all UN members (rather than a donor-centred one),[98] the UNDCF

[98] UNDCF is nested under the UN Economic and Social Council - ECOSOC and is, therefore, open to all member states.

illustrates not only the growing pluralisation of policy and norm-setting arenas (Verschaeve and Orbie 2016; Esteves and Assunção 2014) but also the growing fragmentation in the field, which became clearer in the last High-Level Forum, in Busan, when 'beyond aid' became the talk of the day (Janus, Klingebiel and Paulo 2015).

The 2011 meeting in Busan featured a 'fractured landscape' with donors' anxieties about emerging powers, uncertainties and contradictions in constructing a new, inclusive, 'equator-less' global partnership (the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation - GPEDC) (Eyben and Savage 2013). Bringing the emerging powers into the 'effectiveness tent' was a key issue for the DAC. And yet, in Busan, the continuous monitoring of the Paris commitments was superseded because the agenda was already moving elsewhere. It was time to move beyond 'aid effectiveness' to talk about 'development effectiveness'.

The 'development effectiveness agenda' was, however, even more polysemic. For some Southern partners, it meant bringing trade, FDI, and the private and state-led sector into the discussions. For others it meant upholding 'equal roles for both partners in a development partnership' (Chaturvedi 2012, 572) and seeking for greater 'policy coherence' from donors.[99] For counter-hegemonic actors within DAC and civil society networks, it meant broadening the agenda 'beyond growth' and including rights-based development and crosscutting issues like the environment, governance, social and gender (Eyben 2013; Menocal and Rogerson 2006). Concurrently, for some Northern countries, it meant results-based development management and 'value-for-money' interventions. While the shift from 'aid' to 'development' manged to reframe some of the terminology it has not dislodged the importance of 'effectiveness debates' in the field. Rather it broadened the disputes since development is an equally, if not more, contested term.

Importantly, the (shorted-lived) Busan deal featured a range of issues that remain at the heart of contemporary development cooperation accountability politics. First, it included an agreement on 'differential commitments' for traditional donors and SSC partners (art. 14) where SSC commitments are listed as 'reference' and 'voluntary' (art. 2).[100] Second, Busan reinforced fissures within the South, away from classic G77+China stances at the UN that portrayed 'the South' as a homogenous entity. While the deal was short-lived, the association between a provider's (Northern/Southern) identity and the level and nature of its commitments remains at the heart of the current 'burden-sharing game' (Bracho 2017, 27) over global development responsibilities. Lastly, Busan negotiations introduced the issue of transparency in/of SSC (Mawdsley, Savage and Sung-Mi 2014; Pino 2014), as a prelude to what would become an intense debate in the coming years.

[99] For a discussion on policy coherence in the context of global development, see Carbone (2012); Keijzer (2012).
[100] For an insider discussion about the disputes in Busan and in the following GPEDC meetings on the issue of 'differential commitments', see Bracho (2017).

Accountability mechanisms and its discontents

Aid reforms also brought about new global and national accountability tools to help 'fixing' the accountability problems. These were established at the DAC-level, in bilateral aid agencies, in multilateral banks, across the UN system, in recipient countries, and in the not-for-profit sector (Fox and Brown 1998; Eyben 2008; Berghmans, Simons and Vandenabeele 2017; Sovacool, Naudé Fourie and Tan-Mullins 2019; Morasso and Lamas 2020). Despite their diversity in nature and purposes, numerous tools were set-up to *measure* aid and *demonstrate* aid flows and their effectiveness (Mosse 2011; Eyben and Guijt 2015; Honig 2020) and much of the 'aid accountability debate' turned into discussing the technicalities to perfect this task. *Aidland's* focus on building mechanisms and tools, I contend, contributed to consolidate two accountability dynamics in the field: first, sustaining the aid industry's needs to produce and perform 'success' to different publics (Mosse 2004; Rottenburg 2009) and, second, opening space for several stakeholders—including critical voices within *Aidland*, civil society groups, and Southern recipients—to contest aid practices and aid relations through either advocating for the adoption of mechanisms or renegotiating their functioning. In what follows I will discuss some of these mechanisms, the negotiations around them, and their sociopolitical effects.

Development cooperation is a sector that has for long focused on 'universal technical solutions' and 'best practices' (Ferguson 1994; Honig and Gulrajani 2018). It is also a sector with tendencies to legal and para-legal harmonisation (de Chazournes 2011) and bureaucratic isomorphism (Yanguas and Hulme 2015). Policy and normative diffusion traditionally relied on a limited number of centres, namely the OECD-DAC and the World Bank, and on the leadership of certain countries within these spaces, for long the United States (US) and some European countries like the United Kingdom (UK) and Germany (Lancaster 2007).

The DAC functions as a 'closed space' that decides what global development is and how to measure it in a club diplomacy manner (Eyben 2013). DAC's 'oligarchic' nature (Badie 2013) helps understanding the historical and present disputes between this space and other 'universal membership' spaces, such UNCTAD or the UNDCF,[101] and the role played by Brazil, China and India in historically advocating for the democratisation of global development governance (Alexandroff and Cooper 2010; Hurrell 2013). Their criticism of the legitimacy of DAC-led initiatives in light of the limited representation of Southern voices inside this space strongly shapes SSC global accountability politics, as I will show in Chapter 4.

At the global level, the OECD-DAC has been a major space for accountability standard-setting. Standardisation (or attempts to reach it) have been done through a vast network of 'soft law': non-binding

[101] The divergences started already in the 1960s, when the then UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold disagreed with the creation of the DAC outside the UN. In the following decades, the DAC and UNCTAD often diverged on issues of development and development cooperation. A new divide emerged, in 2007, when the UNDCF was created.

rules and codes of conduct (Paulo and Reisen 2010; S. Kim and Lightfoot 2011).[102] The most significant creation by the DAC has been the very *concept of Official Development Assistance (ODA)* and its body of statistics. Due to the peer-nature of the DAC, the need to generate quantifiable and comparable data on donors became a major feature of its accountability regime and the ODA statistics its main infrastructural response.[103] As a social measure, ODA definition and statistics attempt to harmonise practices within the field (Hynes and Scott 2013). At the same time, as a measurement and reporting tool to count aid spending, ODA statistics are a proxy for 'state aid efforts' and an indicator of performance as much as of 'generosity' (Veen 2011, 140).

The concept of ODA and its statistics are, nonetheless, far from static and have been renegotiated several times to adapt to new realities in donors' aid practices.[104] DAC members took almost ten years to agree on a first ODA definition, in 1969. The concept was then refined in 1972 with the 'development purpose' of aid and 'levels of concessionality'[105] as central components (Riddell 2007).[106] The statistical definition of ODA has continuously changed since. Internally, heated technical-political controversies appeared over whether and how to count aid modalities such as technical cooperation, emergency aid, debt relief and over measuring concessionality levels (Vanheukelom et al. 2012; Hynes and Scott 2013; S. Scott 2019).[107] ODA metrics was also criticised by aid watchdogs and Southern practitioners to whom the counting allowed for 'phantom aid': funds not made available to developing countries because they are in-country spending in Northern countries (Development Initiatives 2014).

[102] This is coherent with OECD overall business model, which is reliant on an agreed-upon community of values, international soft law, policy transfer and peer-review (Pal 2014; Hadjiisky 2017). According to Pal (2014, 196), the OECD acts as an 'ideational artist' in global policymaking through the use of research, persuasion, modelling, peer-review and a host of other tools.

[103] The role ODA statistics play in 'donorship' is equally linked to the statistics-heavy identity of OECD as an organisation.

[104] Debates mostly occurred in donor spaces with donor stakeholders, with the UN spaces playing a secondary role (Vanheukelom et al. 2012).

[105] *Concessionality* measures the softness of a credit and is used by the DAC to reflect the benefit to the borrower in comparison to a loan at market rate. OECD methods to define *concessionality* (and the terms for grant element and discount rate) differ from the World Bank's one (see Bhattacharya and Rashmin 2020).

[106] Until 2017, the DAC defined ODA as 'those flows to countries and territories on the DAC List of ODA Recipients and to multilateral institutions which are: (i) provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies; and (ii) each transaction of which: (a) is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective; and (b) is concessional in character and conveys a grant element of at least 25 per cent (calculated at a rate of discount of 10 per cent)'. In 2018, the DAC agreed on a new definition for the 'grant equivalent measure of ODA'. See http://www.oecd.org/development/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm (last access: 04/12/2020).

[107] Regarding the subsequent changes, for some these were minor 'interpretation changes' (Riddell 2007; Hynes and Scott 2013), while for others both 'minor and strong changes'(Vanheukelom et al. 2012). For instance, some administration costs, in-country costs with refugees, education/scholarships, and elements of debt forgiveness were also partially included in the statistical measure. In the recent years, the DAC initiated a discussion, strongly led by the UK, on 'modernising' ODA (UK Parliament 2018) to broaden it to further include spending with peacekeeping and humanitarian aid (including with refugee support beyond the first-year of arrival) and also to go beyond the poverty focus (Gulrajani 2019). Debates on whether to revise ODA-eligibility and graduation is another example of how the concept is not-static. In 2012, the OECD-DAC launched its own 'modernisation of its statistical system', with changes with regard to the measurement of concessional loans to the public sector, private sector instruments, peace and security expenditures, and in-donor refugee costs. Later, in 2019, the OCDE has decided that the 'grant equivalent system' would become the standard for measuring ODA replacing the previous 'cash or flow basis' method. See https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/modernisation-dac-statistical-system.htm (last access: 05/10/2020).

These definitional and statistical debates highlight the nature of aid metrics as inherently political 'moving targets' (Sears 2019). This is why, following the adoption of the Agenda 2030, attempts were made to develop a new universal metrics, the Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD). Under negotiation since 2015, TOSSD still lacks buy-in from large SSC providers, like Brazil, China and India.[108] These countries perceived the proposed new measure more as survival strategy for the DAC than a measurement need for the SDGs (Besharati 2017; Li 2019), or worse, as a DAC attempt to 'subsume SSC into its data structure' (M. Chakrabarti 2019, 53) and further dilute Northern historical responsibilities towards Southern countries (Besharati 2017).

Besides the ODA metrics, another accountability tool is the *DAC Peer Review Mechanism*, a compliance instrument used to put ODA 'soft law' in practice (Paulo and Reisen 2010). Peer reviews are a type of accountability mechanism where donors 'hold mirrors to each other' (OPM 2008).[109] The mechanism works through peer pressure and soft persuasion. Every five years, each member is evaluated by its peers against a set of references including the Paris Declaration and DAC 'best practices' (OECD 2020). The DAC then makes recommendations and suggestions for improvement. Together, peer reviews and ODA metrics became the major global accountability tools in *Aidland*.

Outside the DAC, several other global accountability infrastructures bloomed in the past decades. This include the *World Bank Inspection Panel*, the first and most comprehensive 'independent accountability mechanism' or 'accountability office'[110] inside a multilateral development bank and a benchmark to other Northern-led multilaterals (Caitlin et al. 2016; Sovacool, Naudé Fourie and Tan-Mullins 2019).[111] The Bank has also been an important 'knowledge actor' (Bebbington 2006; Bazbauers 2018) in shaping broader understandings around development cooperation and development finance accountability. This includes mainstreaming the notions of 'socio-environmental safeguards' and 'do-no-harm' in development projects[112] and diffusing several M&E artefacts, such as the LogFrames, cost-benefits analysis, and Randomised Control Trials (RCTs).[113]

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[108] INT-BR-47; INT-BR-44; INT-OSS-16. Brazil (through ABC and IPEA) and China (through the MOFCOM-affiliated think tank CAITEC) have joined as observers (not proper members) of the TOSSD task-force, while India is not participating at all. In the recent years, domestic political shifts in Brazil have, nonetheless, made the country more eager to engage with the OECD and in 2020, the country formally joined the task-force. Other Southern countries, like Mexico, have participated more actively both from GPEDC and from the TOSSD debates.

[109] Mirror mechanisms coexist with other types of mechanisms including 'spotlight' (non-official mechanisms) and 'two-way mirrors' (mutual performance oversight by both donors and recipients).

[110] See https://www.accountabilitycounsel.org/accountability-resources/accountability-office-faqs/ (last access 05/08/2020).

[111] For a comprehensive review on independent accountability mechanisms across a range of multilateral development banks, see Caitlin et al. (2016).

[112] This includes standards and safeguard based on the principle of 'do-no-harm', as well as benchmarks for private development finance, such as the World Bank International Finance Corporation (IFC) Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability. For more on the 'do-no-harm' approach, see Chapter 7.

[113] These instruments were not necessarily developed by the World Bank, but the Bank has helped disseminating them. In the case of LogFrames, this tool was first devised in the US in 1969 by request of USAID. It was then also disseminated

The *UN development system* has also developed and mainstreamed its own tools. The UN Evaluation Group, for instance, has a standard-setting role, creating evaluation standards and guidelines for several organisations in the system.[114] Simultaneously, agencies like UNICEF, known for its strong evaluation culture, have produced and tailored mandate-specific accountability infrastructures.[115] Anotehr example is the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which has also developed its own artefacts for greater transparency of humanitarian donations, such as the Financial Tracking Services platform.[116]

In the recent years, non-state and multi-stakeholder initiatives have also developed numerous tools, indicators and benchmarks for donors' transparency. This includes the *International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI),* a voluntary initiative gathering CSOs, donors and recipient governments. In 2011, IATI members have agreed on a standard for development organisations to publish their aid-related engagements.[117] Connected to IATI, the London-based NGO Publish What You Fund (PWYF) has developed, in 2011, the annual *Aid Transparency Index (ATI)* for development organisations. Lastly, there is *AidData,* a collaborative research initiative established in 2004 in the US, to provide granular data on aid projects worldwide.[118] Since 2017, the initiative hosts the *China AidData*.[119]

These ICT-based transparency initiatives are firmly embedded in the 'revolution in aid data' that took place in the mid-2000s, with an increasing focus on 'data for development' (*data4dev*). The 2030 Agenda has been largely framed along these lines, recognising 'good data systems' to achieve the SDGs as important and often lacking. Yet another buzzword, *data4dev* brings promises to the field as well as its own forms of politics (who counts and what counts as development data) and even de-politicisation, with data being treated as purely the realm of statisticians or web-developers (Jensen and Winthereik 2013; Ruppert, Isin and Bigo 2017; Fukuda-Parr and McNeill 2019).

Alongside transparency, and often interacting with it, the current landscape is also populated by numerous M&E tools. These respond to multiple interests within *Aidland*: gathering knowledge ('knowing projects'), upward reporting (to donors and their principals) and/or enabling participation in the field. While increasingly informed by efficiency concerns, evaluation remains a political act, inseparable from broader political processes, strategies and interests of decision-makers (Faria 2005; Parkhurst 2017). Evidence-gathering plays a key role in status-seeking dynamics that prompt different countries to showcase success

nationally in several Western countries to assess public policies. For a critical historical background on the use of LogFrames and of its de-contextualising and technification effects, see Laporte (2015).

[114] This includes the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, first approved in 2008 and revised in 2020 (see UNEG 2020).

[115] For example, the UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Reports Standards (UNICEF 2017).

[116] See https://fts.unocha.org/ (last access: 17/01/2020). Brazil, China and India are listed as humanitarian aid donors and have their contributions recorded in the database.

[117] Currently, IATI hosts a database on aid flows by more than 1000 organisations. Brazil, China and India opted out.

[118] See http://aiddata.org/our-story (last access: 03/01/2020).

[119] See https://www.aiddata.org/china (last access: 03/01/2020); also Dreher et al. (2017).

to seek for recognition or assert power. It also plays a role in domestic politics, whereby aid organisations show results to secure funding within domestic budgets and public support (Rottenburg 2009; Jensen and Winthereik 2013; Laporte 2015). Evidence-gathering in *Aidland* is also infused by power dynamics and raises questions of whose knowledge on processes and outcomes counts, what kind of evidence counts, and how to use them. Existing knowledge regimes create rigid, albeit always contested, gradients of what is evidence and what is acceptable evidence to prove successful development interventions, as the intractable debates on RCTs illustrate.[120] The role of experts and the 'quali-quanti' disputes are particularly important here, as they constitute a central piece of *Aidland's* evaluation infrastructures and determine their social workings, their (perceived) legitimacy and their ability to produce success and accountability.

National aid accountability mechanisms

Accountability mechanisms were also established at the national level. While the various national experiences across DAC members and Southern recipients will not be examined here,[121] it is important to emphasise that national aid transparency legislations, aid-tracking tools and reporting systems established in DAC members were developed both reflecting global trends as well as responding to national circumstances. Domestic factors include political culture and policy styles, horizontal accountability practices and also how aid interacted with other policy domains. It also important to highlight the fragmentation, and in some cases even 'duelling' (PWYF 2017) among tools, that happened at the national level. Both trends, 'vernacularisation'[122] and fragmentation, are found in SSC providers, as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Besides transparency tools, donor countries have also developed and refined different audit and control systems for political and financial accountability purposes. In the UK, since 2011 development cooperation has been internally subjected to the oversight by the Parliament and by the Independent Commission for

[120] For critical analysis on the use of RCTs see Chambers (2017); Jannuzzi (2018); Kabeer (2020). A recent surge in this debate after the 2019 Nobel of Economics award to two major champions of RCTs in development illustrates that these disputes IDC are far from over. See Kvangraven (2020) for a recent discussion about the 'rule of randomistas' in the field.

[121] This includes transparency reforms took place in Germany (at GIZ) and in the US (USAID published its strategic paper on open data in 2015, whereas the Millennium Challenge Corporation has put a premium on gathering and publishing data and became the leading US institution in the ATI). National guarantees on transparency were adopted to promote national frameworks' alignment with international standards such as the ATI in countries like the United Kingdom (following the 2015 Aid Strategy and the 2017 Cabinet Office transparency commitment), Sweden, and the US (through the 2016 Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act). Open-data aid transparency infrastructures also mushroomed, particularly since 2011: Denmark's Danida Open Aid (in 2014), Sweden's openaid.se (in 2014), the UK DFID's Development Tracker (in 2013), USAID's Global Aid Explorer (in 2015), and the US Government's Foreign Assistance Dashboard (in 2010). See Honig and Weaver (2019) for a detailed account on national transparency tools in donor countries.

[122] I borrow this term from Prashant Sharma (2014), who applied the term in the context of the adoption by India of its Right to Information Act, in 2005, amidst a global trend of access to information/freedom of information legislation in the world in the 2000s.

Aid Impact (ICAI).[123] In the US, political-financial control of aid has been done through the Congress.[124] Congress oversight has been noticeable in the case of the World Bank and other multilaterals where Washington is the major shareholder (Babb 2009; Park 2019). In Denmark, the National Audit Office not only controls the legality of expenditures but also offers consultancy-like recommendations to the Danish aid agency on its workings. Changes in auditing towards efficiency-related control, what Jensen and Winthereik (2013) called 'audit implosion', are growing worldwide, including in Brazil (Peters 2002; Filgueiras 2019; also Chapter 5).

The social-political implications of aid accountability debates, reforms and tools

This last sub-section reflects the sociopolitical implications of the past, and still unfinished, debates, reforms and accountability tools in *Aidland*. In particular, I explore three set of dynamics: socialisation, negotiations and de-/re-politicisation of development cooperation.

The *socialisation* effects of accountability debates, reforms and tools are materialised in boundary-making, hierarchising and competition dynamics within the field. This is mainly due to the generative work of accountability reforms and tools in standardising practices among donors and in producing compliance-resistance dynamics. The genealogy of ODA and its quantitative metrics, for instance, show DAC's role in creating a tool to regulate its members' behaviour and set the boundaries of what 'donorship' means in practice; assuring the birth of a 'community of donors' (Lancaster 2007; Esteves and Assunção 2014). These boundaries, as postulated by critical IR scholarship (see Chapter 1), have hierarchising effects inside and outside the DAC. Inside, groups were formed (the like-minded groups, those who meet the 0.7% target, those who target poverty alleviation, etc.) and certain types of deviance became more or less stigmatised, for instance the Japanese 'Asian model for aid'.[125] Outside, boundaries have strengthened recipient-donor inequalities and spurred the stigmatisation of 'Non-DAC' providers.

Accountability norms and tools have allowed therefore for the crystallisation of a relatively stable—albeit always contested from within—shared identity among donors based on variable degrees of conformity with DAC norms.[126] Measures, rankings, and other performance indicators functioned as levers of 'social

[123] Until 2020 legislative oversight was done by the International Development Parliamentary Select Committee and ICAI. See https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-responses-to-the-independent-commission-for-aid-impact-icai-reports (last access 01/09/2020). The implications of the DFID-FCO merger under the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), announced in June 2020, to this accountability system are still unclear at the time of this writing (Bishop 2020; Worley 2020).
[124] The 2016 Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act also requires the US President to set forth guidelines for M&E country's aid. In January 2018, the Office of Management and Budget issued the required guidelines for federal agencies. The Act also contained a provision for General Accountability Office to analyse the guidelines established by the Office; and assess the implementation of the guidelines by the agencies.
[125] On the 'Asian model' in the case of Japan, China, India, and South Korea, see Jerve (2007); S. Kim and Lightfoot (2011); Doucette (2020).
[126] Inside donor-led institutions, these dynamics responded to the very heterogeneity of donor countries, their diverse aid practices and their domestic politics at home (Lancaster 2007; Veen 2011).

pressure' in favour of 'DAC-ability' (S. Kim and Lightfoot 2011). Moreover, with their 'commensurability effects' (Espeland and Saunder 2007), tools like the ODA metrics or the ATI ranking generated comparability but also competition among donors. This was not an unwelcomed effect; considering the rhetoric of needing to expand flows of ODA to meet global development goals and targets set at different points.

Yet competition has not led to full convergence among individual donor states and the history of aid remained 'replete with donor countries failing to commit aid funds that have been pledged, to budget aid the quantities committed, and to disburse funds in the amounts budgeted' (Riddell 2007, 46). Examples of implementation gaps and/or resistance inside the donor community include the US (implicit or explicit) refusal to adhere to the 0.7% ODA/GNI target (Clemens and Moss 2005) but also DAC donors' uneven compliance with the ATI, even among different 'aid bureaucracies' inside a same country, as in the case of the UK (Bond 2018).[127] 'DAC-ability', therefore, has always been multifaceted, ambiguous and incomplete, including among major donors like the US, Germany and the UK (Paulo and Reisen 2010; S. Kim and Lightfoot 2011; Gulrajani and Calleja 2019). Rendering visible the simultaneous normative compliance and deviance within the DAC is particularly important as to show that 'traditional' donors have not always been more consistently compliant with norms they themselves helped design than outsiders, including China, in the more recent years (Bräutigam 2009).[128]

Another set of dynamics refers to the past and ongoing geopolitical, epistemic and citizenship accountability-related *negotiations* within and around the DAC and its accountability standards. Internally, epistemic disputes and negotiations are visible not only in the fact that the OECD Working Group working on ODA was first called the 'DAC Group on Statistical *Problems'* (our emphasis) but also in the successive changes in the concept of ODA and how to measure it through the decades. The recent incorporation of debt relief into the ODA accounting in the context of the Covid-19 outbreak illustrates the always-moving ODA metrics and the debates around it.[129] Externally, unfinished North-South negotiations over the TOSSD further highlight the sociotechnical and political disputes between experts in and outside *Aidland* over what and whose knowledge counts.

'Aid monitoring movements' have also negotiated these reforms and tools, using them to dispute aid budgets and results and to exert pressure on development organisations to adopt and improve accountability mechanisms in the first place. Mechanisms, particularly data-focused ones, provided a starting

[127] As aid started to be disbursed by different agencies within the UK, the former DFID kept scored higher than for instance the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In 2018, for instance, DFID ranked third for transparency out of 45 global aid donors in the Aid Transparency Index, while the Foreign Office was ranked 40th (PWYF 2018).
[128] An illustration of this point is found in Haug (2020) when discussing Turkey, where he argues that Turkey reporting practices to the DAC have both accepted DAC normative powers while subverting its rules.
[129] In the summer of 2020, as a response to Covid-19, the DAC has decided to include debt relief as part of its ODA definition, sparking opposition among civil society that feared this would generate incentives for donors to provide more loans and less grants and that they would use debt reliefs to meet the 0.7 ODA/GNI target (Saldinger 2020).

point from which agreements could be forged or disagreements voiced (A. Gupta 2012; McGee 2013). National and transnational advocacy campaigns managed to create alternative information tools or to use existing ones to 'name and shame' accountability norms' 'underperformers and violators' (Towns and Rumelili 2017). Aid transparency movements also used these tools to dispute the quantum of flows, how to measure it, as much as results on the ground.

Finally, looking at these multiple sociopolitical implications in a combined manner, is possible to argue that reforms and tools have simultaneously de- and re-politicised global development accountability debates. Undoubtedly, much of the political discomfort embedding *Aidland*'s credibility crisis ended up being channelled, and often reduced, to managerial reforms that rendered accountability technical and limited to building managerial-fixes and counting tools. Arguably, accounting-based accountability—related to a longstanding 'metrics obsession' in the field[130]—contributed to de-politicise accountability in *Aidland*. As suggested by Espeland and Sauder (2007, 36), 'once accountability is understood quantitatively and is equated with good governance, the meanings of many core values—efficiency, improvement, accessibility, transparency, responsibility, responsiveness, and even democracy—are redefined and reinscribed in our institutions as technical rather than political accomplishments'.

At the same time, tools created have also been object of numerous critiques and debates and challenged by the 'practice of politics' (T. M. Li 2007). Rather than purely technical-methodological debates, these can be seen as openings for a range of publics to dispute development cooperation policies and practices. Debates allowed for different sociotechnical conceptions about how accountability mechanisms work in practice to emerge, but also for deep divergences on development and aid policies and practices to be vocalised, in at least three ways. First, Southern governments, as 'aid recipients', grew increasingly critical of the 'Effectiveness Agenda' and of how overlapping accountability mechanisms were imposed on their bureaucracies creating heavy management burden (Hickey and Mohan 2008; Jensen and Winthereik 2013).[131] Tools were also criticised for being 'technocratic artifacts' (Laporte 2017), contributing to 'downgrading recipients' and 'abusing power' (Laporte 2015; T. Kim and Lim 2017), or generating a 'tower of Babel' and bypassing national accountability institutions and mechanisms on the ground (Namburete 2018; Llanos 2019).

Second, discontent has also grown within *Aidland*, not only because tools made some problems more visible but also because they generated other problems to the field. Discussing why accountability mechanisms 'fail' allowed for politics to be brought back by critics within *Aidland* for instance when questioning the obsession with 'accounting for aid rather than promoting accountable aid' and with 'building mechanisms'

[130] See Chambers (2017) and Roy (2015) on the concept of poverty; Ferguson (1994) and Swyngedouw (2013) on World Bank and UN reports; Fukuda-Parr (2016) on the politics of goals setting for the MDGs; and Fukuda-Parr and McNeill 2019 on the SDGs agenda.
[131] INT-BR-61.

rather than making sense of aid as a set of (political) relations between different partners and constituencies (Eyben 2008; Hickey and Mohan 2008; Gaventa and McGee 2013). Politics was equally reinserted when practitioners became more aware of the effects programming, projecting and assessing had on donor-recipient accountability and trust relations between countries (Gulrajani and Faure 2019). Lastly, re-politicisation is also seen in the questioning around how the 'reformed aid paradigm' created new forms of audit control and generated new infrastructures that could not deliver on the expected horizontal and trust relationships (Swedlund 2017; Namburete 2018).

Third, politics was reinfused at a practice-level. As Espeland and Sauder (2007) argue, quantitative measures produce reflexivity on actors themselves and encourage them to question their faith in the 'objectivity of numbers' (Porter 1996). For some aid practitioners, reflections also meant questioning their own faith in the aid industry, displaying growing signs of discomfort with *Aidland's* measuring and documentation practices (that count rather than account results and/or overclaim impact)[132] and with the organisational consequences of these (crowding out learning and adaptation, including learning from failure) (Riddell 2007; Laporte 2015; Honig and Gulrajani 2018).[133]

In sum, despite its many embedded tensions, both reforms and tools have opened the space for different actors and publics to re-politicise development cooperation policies, practices and relations. It offered 'Southern recipients' the possibility to re-state longstanding claims on the shortcomings of the Washington Consensus agenda and on the asymmetries of North-South cooperation. It also made possible, in some cases, to reengage the very idea of partnerships and renegotiate some of the aid terms, along the principles of ownership and donors' alignment to national priorities.[134] It finally offered domestic constituencies (and civil society groups in both Northern donors and Southern recipients) possibilities to use the information generated through transparency infrastructures to push for reforms and claim citizenship, voicing concerns about domestic and foreign policies priorities and disputing the meaning of development and development cooperation. This is a point to which I will return when discussing SSC accountability-related social mobilisation in subsequent chapters.

[132] Eyben and Guijt (2015) have once characterised these documentation practices as 'counting beans' and generating 'sausage numbers'. The former relates to the over-bureaucratisation of the development cooperation activity and the ways in which organisations and their staff are trapped into chains of counting, reporting, producing information to the visible and imagined users of 'transparency and accountability infrastructures' and doing less of the proper development-related work. While the latter is about current measurement regimes, often based on measuring performance for control rather than learning, creating incentives to focus on what can be counted (measurable) not on everything that counts (including complex and unmeasurable things).

[133] See Devex 'What Went Wrong?' project as an attempt, available at https://devex.shorthandstories.com/what-went-wrong/ (last access: 27/07/2020).

[134] Winthereik and Jensen (2013) account of Vietnam and Denmark is one example of those re-negotiated terms, also Laporte (2017) on Laos and the ways in which the government developed, in 2006, a local version of the Paris Declaration, the Vietiene Declaration, to coordinate donors' efforts in the country.

Accountability in South-South cooperation as a problem

In the early 2000s, not only was *Aidland* trying to reform itself but also SSC (re)entered the scene and brought new elements to this equation. Several observers conceived the 'crisis in *Aidland*' as an important factor for the emergence and 'initial success' of a Southern-led development cooperation paradigm (Esteves and Assunção 2014; M. Chakrabarti 2016; Muhr 2016; Mawdsley 2019). Indeed, SSC providers used the wave of aid reforms to sustain their own 'bid to difference'. Up to a certain point, SSC was perceived or portraited as having a higher moral ground because aid was failing and because SSC providers were proposing alternatives (S. Kim and Lightfoot 2011; Zoccal and Esteves 2018).

Embedded in a competitive and heavily measured and audited landscape, the growing visibility and political significance of SSC also started to generate its own forms of accountability debates and disputes. In this context, I argue, both the existing norms and ways of practicing 'aid accountability' and the unfolding North-South politics are important shapers of the set of global geopolitical and knowledge disputes around SSC accountability that emerged in the mid-2000s. Problematisations of accountability in/of SSC came first and foremost from traditional donors and from *Aidland* practitioners. As SSC flows continued to rise, however, SSC accountability also became the object of different sorts of social-political problematisation by stakeholders in the South: including knowledge actors, CSOs within rising powers, and, more recently, other Southern governments and their domestic publics.

Transparency and 'heterodox practices' as problems

While rising powers have been historically vocal in exposing donors' accountability deficits and questioning their accountability tools, in the early 2000s, large Southern providers also became the object of accountability calls. In this context, I contend, SSC accountability deficits became problematic for many in *Aidland* in two inter-related ways: first, SSC transparency deficits and, second, Southern providers' 'heterodox practices'.[135]

In the context of increased material and symbolic competition between Northern and Southern providers and renewed pushes for mobilising resources to meet the SDGs, *SSC transparency* started to emerge as a problem for policymakers from DAC donors and for existing 'aid monitoring movements'. Absences were identified in the availability of data on the total quantum of SSC flows, on the exact nature of flows and on SSC performance and impacts on the ground (Di Ciommo 2017; Besharati 2018). In a 2014 report entitled

[135] Here I borrow the expression from Cesarino (2013, 17) to whom an example of negative assessment of emerging donors by those who stand by development aid would be that 'through their heterodox and unaccountable practices, new donors would be jeopardizing the good work achieved by traditional aid thus far'.

'Non-DAC Countries and the Debate on Measuring Post-2015 Development Finance', the OECD put the issue as follows:

> *The increasingly important role of emerging donors' is a phrase frequently seen in publications on development co-operation over recent years. There remain, however, few reliable data to show the extent to which it is a reality. This 'evidence deficit' is broadly recognised as a challenge that needs to be addressed.* (OECD 2014, 2).

The same report indicated that data collection efforts on SSC failed 'to capture annual, comparable and validated monetised information on development co-operation by bilateral providers. This information is available whenever non-DAC providers report their data to the OECD' (ibid, 4). Aid watchdogs, like PWYF, also extended their transparency concerns to 'emerging donors', as illustrated in this op-ed:

> *Unfortunately, the transparency of these emerging donors has lagged behind their budgets. Why does this matter? Not just because transparency has been agreed as an international principle, though it has, but because publishing comprehensive, timely and comparable information on aid and development finance is essential to making development more effective. This is true whether we are talking about north-south aid, south-south cooperation or any other kind of international assistance.* (Simons 2017).

As the two extracts reveal, SSC transparency was becoming problematic to those in *Aidland* for at least three reasons. First, because SSC providers were not reporting to external bodies (e.g., the DAC or IATI) due to non-membership and acknowledged rejection of their hegemony and metrics. Second, due to the 'blurred' lines of South-South development flows and the high share of in-kind cooperation and non-monetary cooperation flows, which were methodologically and politically difficult to account through ODA metrics (see Chapter 4). Third, because accounting systems in Southern providers neither recorded nor publicised certain development cooperation flows, due to lack of political will, technical capacity, or due to the absence of national (open)data transparency policies.

Considering the triple role transparency plays in ODA (as an international 'soft law', a 'best practice' for development organisations and a governing tool), there are two ways to situate the emergence of transparency calls directed to Southern providers. First, as an extension of DAC 'club dynamics' to the 'newcomers', as happened with South Korea and with the Eastern European countries in the mid-2000s. Integrating Southern providers became even more crucial after 2015, in light of the renewed calls for robust measurement tools, enhanced statistical systems and open data for development to assist tracking 'the trillions of dollars' needed to achieve the SDGs (Esteves 2017). Second, as a product of the anxieties within *Aidland* and a urge to know and discipline Southern providers, where 'lack of transparency' worked as a stigmatising discourse. Under this script, SSC data 'scarcity' acted as the broken mirror of (a real or

imagined) ODA data 'abundance' in the North, matching and reinforcing negative descriptions of SSC landscapes as 'poorly institutionalised' and of Southern partners as 'opaque'.

Hence, finding ways to conceptualise and measure SSC, both quantifying and evaluating it, were the logical solution 'to fix' the SSC transparency problem and bring Southern providers closer to 'donorship' practices: not only measurement-related but also to the broader set of standards and expectations on donor behaviour, including untying aid, targeting poverty alleviation, respecting a minimum set of socio-environmental standards, mainstreaming gender issues and promoting local participation (Bräutigam 2009; Paulo and Reisen 2010; Xiaoyun and Carey 2014; Laporte 2017). The problematisation of SSC 'heterodox practices' became visible in both bilateral donors and UN agencies strategic dialogues with large Southern providers to support (and socialise) them into being 'proper donors'. An example can be found in UK's Emerging Powers Strategy, approved in July 2015 (now superseded), which attempted to work with Brazil, China, India, and others to:

> *i) making* [their] *development assistance more effective; ii) enhancing the development impact of* [their] *investment in poorer countries and regions; iii) responding better to global challenges and iv) working towards an international system that reflects the needs of poor countries.* (DFID 2017b).

The ways SSC transparency and 'heterodox practices' have been problematised contributed to discursively produce contrasting comparisons with how accountability is thought of and (perceived as) practiced by DAC members. Taking Southern providers as unaccomplished copies of DAC donors, deficit discourses contributed, intentionally or not, to Othering them: as incomplete, not-quite-yet, or 'deviant from the DAC ideal-type' (Lauria and Fumagalli 2019). Othering operated as means to control, socialise and integrate Southern providers, repeating the disciplining *modus operandi* of the DAC. While open pressure on (and stigmatising of) rising powers, and in particular China, have been common practices among governments and experts in *Aidland* since the early 2000s (Mawdsley 2018a), overt 'co-optation' practices (Abdenur and Da Fonseca 2013) coexisted, nonetheless, with more subtle discursive formulations. This includes discourses by *Aidland* practitioners I often heard along the lines of 'We don't understand much about SSC' or 'We don't fully know what SSC is, what is inside this label, what exactly SSC providers do'.[136] Othering dynamics have, nonetheless, produced their own forms of responses from SSC providers, generating acts of internalised stigmatisation and non-compliance or 'compliance with resentment' (Zarakol 2014) with formal accountability norms and expectations. These are visible, as I will show shortly and in Chapter 4, when Southern governmental voices, particularly in rising powers, opposed to this presumed 'normalcy' and called for 'Southern ways' to measure and report their development cooperation.

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[136] An example of that can be seen in this UK-based Overseas Development Institute debate with at the time incoming DAC Chair Susanna Moorehead, available https://www.odi.org/events/4613-odi-conversation-dac-chair-susanna-moorehead (last access: 28/07/2020).

The Dragon in the room

While deficit concerns targeted all Southern providers, China has been particularly singled out. Besides the more openly anti-China criticism from the early days (e.g. Collier 2008; Naím 2009),[137] other deficit framings include China's 'rejection' of the transparency goal or norm (Honig and Weaver 2019), China's government 'lack of will' to publish comprehensive data on foreign aid due to domestic concerns (Gu, Chen and Haibin 2016; D. Zhang 2017; UNDP China 2017; Liao et al. 2018), and China's 'alternative aid model' creating conceptual and practical challenges to transparency (Paulo and Reisen 2010).

Transparency concerns also show how knowing and controlling China, particularly in Africa, have grown as interlocked processes. Africanists were among the early formulators of the 'China data problem', since they encountered China when studying development in Africa and 'have identified data reliability as a major impediment for assessing the magnitude and significance of these flows' (Sears 2019, 139). Quickly, tracking China's aid and other development finance flows became a contested field of research (Milani 2019). The epistemic problem was not only to understand the phenomenon and its implications to African development, but also to compare it (with traditional donors and with other rising powers), which often led to a plethora of propositions of how to count Chinese flows and to both overcounting or undercounting dynamics (see Chapter 4 and 6).[138]

China has also been the omnipresent case for the remaining normative discussions. Here the accountability problem was framed in terms of 'development impact' or 'effectiveness', with 'China's accountability deficits' serving as a discursive umbrella for concerns ranging from 'normative deviance', 'rogue aid practices' or the potential 'negative impacts' of Chinese engagements on the ground on issues such as democracy, human rights and governance, labour standards, debt and socio-environmental sustainability (Bräutigam 2009; Paulo and Reisen 2010; Mohan 2014). Concretely, these concerns led to a rise in strategic dialogues and negotiations between 'traditional' donors and China over the inclusion of socio-environmental safeguards in China's overseas investments, including during the creation of the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and in the Green Belt and Road Initiative (Green BRI).[139]

Certain concerns with socio-environmental and human rights impacts of SSC on local communities thematically converged with INGOs and Southern-based CSOs own problematisations of SSC

[137] Collier (2008) argues that China has different 'ethical foundations for its operations` and thus could not be expected to join global transparency initiatives like the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. Cultural and/or regime differences between China and the 'liberal West' have been a recurrent trope in global normative discussions. For an extensive critique, see Bräutigam (2009).

[138] A similar rendition of this urge to understand Chinese flows is found in the case of BRI and the challenges outsiders find in making sense of which projects fall inside the 'BRI umbrella' and which does not.

[139] During AIIB set-up phase European countries wishing to join the China-initiated financial institution have insisted on the need for AIIB to adopt classic 'do-no-harm' principles and tools, present in virtually all the multilateral development banks, and put in place safeguards to avoid and/or compensate adverse social and environmental impacts (which the bank eventually did, although in a hybrid and innovative way) (Vazquez and Chin 2019).

accountability, not only regarding China but for all rising powers (Pomeroy et al. 2016; Poskitt, Shankland and Taela 2016; Thompson and Wet 2018; Yeophantong 2020). This alignment engendered different forms of collaboration between traditional development actors, INGOs and Southern CSOs on transparency and socio-environmental issues. Support from traditional development actors to Southern CSOs came either through aid budgets or through Northern-based foundations and INGOs grants to local actors to research and watchdog SSC providers, with great emphasis on BRICS-related development cooperation with Africa and the BRICS-led NDB. Among the main foundations and INGOs one finds German party and political foundations (Heinrich Böll, Rosa Luxemburg and Friedrich-Ebert), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Mott Foundation, The Asia Foundation, the Oxfam Confederation, Action Aid, Greenpeace, WWF, and many more.[140] Several of these partnerships also adopted the broad topic of accountability in/of SSC as a major agenda.[141]

CSOs based in rising power have therefore participated in constructing the 'SSC accountability problem', either independently or partnering with actors in the development apparatus. They entered existing 'aid monitoring movements' and/or contributed to the integration of SSC as a topic into existing networks and tools, exemplified by *AidData* database on China or the listing of Southern providers in PWYF and Reality of Aid reports (Reality of Aid Project 2010; Publish What You Fund 2017). While embedded in broader global discussions and networks, their problematisation of SSC accountability, 'from within and from below', was done in their own terms, as national CSOs in rising powers perceived 'SSC accountability deficits' as obstacles for their own policy and political engagement with the agenda, as I will discuss in Chapter 7.

Calls for accountability and Southern providers' differentiation claims: resistance, reluctance and innovation

How did rising powers responded to the growing concerns with SSC accountability coming from this plethora of external actors? I start unpacking this question here, arguing that, while upholding strong differentiation claims vis-à-vis ODA and the DAC, rising powers transitioned in the 2010s from an openly critical-resistance position on issues of accountability to a critical-innovation approach to the topic. The following chapters will substantiate this claim discussing rising powers' diplomatic and para-diplomatic

[140] As an example, under its portfolio on 'transforming development finance', the Mott Foundation has provided grants for a range of CSOs and academic institutions based in both Northern and Southern countries, mostly to work on Brazil and China's development finance. See https://www.mott.org/work/environment/finance/ (last access: 19/10/2020).

[141] The Oxfam-Gates 'Leaders Empowered to Alleviate Poverty - LEAP' project, carried out by the Oxfam branches in Brazil, India, and Hong Kong until 2018 in partnership with national CSOs in rising powers, is an example of this kind of collaboration to shape SSC transparency and accountability policies and practices, with a particular attention to Southern development cooperation agencies and development finance practices. Oxfam work also included countries like Mexico, South Africa, and Turkey (INT-OSS-5; INT-OSS-5). Among its expected outcomes, the Oxfam-Gates LEAP project featured the following goals: 'Government development cooperation agencies in target BRICSAMIT countries have put in place policies on transparency and are governed by them' and 'Improved accountability policies and practices have been put in place and are implemented by the governmental development cooperation agencies of target BRICSAMIT countries'. The referred project outcomes are available in internal Oxfam-Gates LEAP documents the author had access to.

stances regarding global SSC measurement debates (Chapter 4) and the negotiations over accountability and over experimenting with SSC transparency and accountability at the domestic level in Brazil, China and India (Chapters 5 and 6).

Contrasting with the explicit interest of traditional development actors and civil society groups on SSC accountability, the topic took longer to become (or be perceived as) problematic for governments in the South. During the early 2000s, the issue was largely absent from the main Southern-led development-related policy and dialogue spaces (including UNCTAD, The South Centre or the G77+China coalition at the UN). As mentioned, SSC was also a blind-spot in the OECD-led 'Effectiveness Agenda', which received the (critical) support of several Southern countries, as 'aid recipients', perhaps because the 'accountability problem' there was framed as a North-South 'aid-related' issue.

The first formal mention of accountability in a SSC intergovernmental document is found in the 2009 Nairobi Outcome Document, agreed upon during the First High-Level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation (see Chapter 4).[142] Yet at the time many within *SSC-land* perceived the accountability issue as either 'undesirable' or 'too sensitive'. Diplomatic and para-diplomatic reluctance, or even resistance, relied on a set of reasonings such as: 'Accountability is a Northern-aid problem', 'SSC is horizontal and demand-driven and thus automatically (more) accountable to partners', 'SSC is a solidarity-based endeavour and does not rely on obligations, such as conditionalities or mutual accountability' and/or 'OECD-led accountability mechanisms cannot be operationalised in SSC'.

These defensive narratives were, and remain, omnipresent in *SSC-land* debates on accountability. I illustrate this point with a short vignette from a 2017 multi-stakeholder policy dialogue on monitoring and evaluation organised by two Brazilian think-tanks, BRICS Policy Centre (BPC) and *Articulação SUL*, together with the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC).[143] The meeting fed into ongoing internal reflexions within ABC that led to a publication of a road map to support further institutional developments on SSC measurement in Brazil (BPC/ASUL 2017; also Chapter 5).[144] At one point, one Southern expert intervened stating that SSC was 'extremely accountable and transparent', clarifying that these were, nonetheless, 'OECD concepts'. The expert carried on and engaged with a previous provocation from a CSO representative in the room about whose demands counts in SSC stating that: 'We should respect elected governments demands'. He further emphasised that SSC accountability: 'Is already there' when Southern countries accept to engage in SSC efforts. Adding: 'If we were not helping, they would be throwing us out', making sure to state that his

[142] The Nairobi conference was held to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA). Esteves (2018) highlight, however, that BAPA recommendations numbers 3 to 5 did emphasise the need for evidence, even if had no mention of 'accountability' *per se*.
[143] For an overview on BPC-led Dialogues on South-South Cooperation, see https://bricspolicycenter.org/en/projetos/south-south-cooperation-dialogues/ (last access: 04/09/2020). This Dialogue and the following one in 2018 were organised with the financial support of the UK, among other sponsors (DFID 2017b).
[144] INT-BR-6; INT-BR-44.

country has always been welcomed. He concluded the intervention stating that, in sum, accountability 'is there' and effectiveness 'is also there'.

The vignette and the narratives mentioned above illuminate the range of resistance to and engagement with the topic by representatives of rising powers and/or their development experts, both embracing and rejecting effectiveness and accountability language. On the one hand, these are discursive elements that show how accountability was not initially rendered a problem in Southern countries' diplomatic and para-diplomatic stances. On the other hand, they further highlight the role played by differentiation claims about SSC in underpinning Southern governments (from rising powers and beyond) initial, and in some cases persistent, opposition to operationalise accountability in SSC.

Differentiation claims are embedded in (existing, perceived or even performed) normative, conceptual, methodological and institutional differences between Southern providers and DAC donors, and between SSC and ODA.[145] Differentiation applies to SSC as a collective enterprise, portrayed as accountable by the virtue of its horizontal and demand-driven nature (e.g., T. Kim and Lim 2017). It also applies to rising powers themselves in what they framed as their 'non-hypocritical' (Six 2009), 'responsible' (Chaturvedi 2012), or 'exceptionally benign' partnerships (Chanana 2009; Dye and Alencastro 2020). Furthermore, Southern providers positioned themselves not only as *different* from traditional donors but also a *diverse* group of countries. Brazil (and other Latin American countries) differentiated themselves from the 'Asian powers' and both Brazil and India portrayed themselves as different from perceived 'Chinese model' and 'ways of working'. India, in particular, systematically defined its global identity in opposition to China, often emphasising its democratic credentials and rule-based global development engagements.[146] This is visible in an official press release by India's MEA on country's no-participation in China's-led BRI, which reads:

> *We are of firm belief that connectivity initiatives must be based on universally recognized international norms, good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency and equality. Connectivity initiatives must follow principles of financial responsibility to avoid projects that would create unsustainable debt burden for communities; balanced ecological and environmental protection and preservation standards; transparent assessment of project costs; and skill and technology transfer to help long term running and maintenance of the assets created by local communities. Connectivity projects must be pursued in a manner that respects sovereignty and territorial integrity.* (GoI/MEA 2017).

India's positioning as a 'responsible connectivity partner/builder'—implicitly distancing itself from China—is increasingly present in official discourses, including during the UN BAPA+40 Conference (see

[145] As mentioned in Chapter 1, differentiation claims have been widely studied in SSC scholarship, in both conceptually and empirically-rich ways (see, *inter alia*, Cesarino 2013; Milani and Duarte 2015; Laporte 2017; Taela 2017; Zoccal and Esteves 2018; Doucette 2020; Cheng 2020).
[146] INT-IN-1; INT-IN-7; INT-IN-20.

Chapter 4).[147] Differentiation vis-à-vis China, and eventually 'Othering China from the South' (Mawdsley 2014b, 974), brings additional elements into the (geo)politics of SSC accountability, particularly in the Indian case. Experts and diplomats' allusion to India's democratic and international law-abiding credentials serves, therefore, as an instrumental diplomatic tool to position a 'democratic'/'responsible' India as different from (and better than) the neighbouring 'authoritarian'/'irresponsible' China, while investing little at home to put in place accountability instruments in its own SSC compact, as shown in Chapter 6.

How to understand differentiation-based reluctance and/or resistance stances in *SSC-land* to engage with accountability issues? Here I suggest four dimensions to be taken into consideration. First, stances are to be located in Southern countries' (rising powers or not) historical distrust of the 'aid accountability agenda' and its many contradictions, as discussed above. Second, stances reflect rising powers' own unwillingness to abide by norms and practices they were not invited to draft; their growing global reformist ambitions; and unwillingness to adopt standards that generate extra justification pressures on their conduct or limit their autonomy to use SSC as a multidimensional policy instrument (one that fosters soft power, foreign policy, trade, strategic goals and beyond).

Third, as mentioned in Chapter 1, large SSC providers' diplomatic stances are strongly informed by the dilemmas and anxieties of their position in international social rankings—simultaneously renegotiating their own rising power status and subalternity—and by the fragility of their 'dual position'[148] as developing-and-rising and providers-while-still-recipients (van der Westhuizen and Milani 2019; Santos, Siman and Fernández 2019). According to one Brazilian development expert, the very idea of reporting on SSC flows was initially received with caution by the highest Brazilian authorities who feared that showcasing country's role as a 'provider' would negatively impact on country's flows of received cooperation.[149]

Fourth, reluctance stances rising powers' multi-layered views and approaches on global responsibilities. Rising powers are strong and vocal defenders of the idea of the 'historical debt' industrialised countries have with poorer nations in the South and the development-related responsibilities they entail (Besharati 2013; Bracho 2017; Esteves et al. 2019). They have equally avoided portraying themselves as 'fully developed' and completely 'mature' or 'ready' to take on greater global responsibilities, what Santos, Siman

[147] In the BAPA+40 statement, the Indian ambassador to the conference stated that: 'All [Indian] projects follow universally recognized norms. They do not create unsustainable debt burdens' (GoI/MEA 2019). Similar arguments are found in the Indian Foreign Secretary address in the 2018 Regional Connectivity Conference: South Asia in the Indo-Pacific Context where he stated that *'connectivity efforts in the region must be based on principles of economic viability and financial responsibility. They should promote economic activity and not place nations under irredeemable debt burden. All connectivity initiatives must follow universally recognized international norms, rule of law, openness, transparency and equality. Incorporation of ecological and environmental standards and skill and technology transfer makes connectivity and infrastructure sustainable in the long term'*. (GoI/MEA 2018).

[148] On the dual position in the Latin American context, see Medina and Muñoz (2019).

[149] INT-BR-44. A discussion on the tensions of Brazilian dual recipient-provider role in the early 2000s, can be found in Leite et al. (2014).

and Fernández (2019) called a 'Peter Pan Syndrome'.[150] Across different policy issues, rising powers have carefully selected the responsibilities they wished to take on and those they would rather relegate to developed countries. This is backed by a strict adherence to the Common But Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR) principle in environmental intergovernmental negotiations, brought to the development realm by the G77+China (Bukovansky et al. 2012; G77 2019b), and a reluctance to update it to what Esteves et al. (2019) call a 'CBDR 2.0' based on 'concentric responsibilities' where differentiation within the South would also apply. I will return to this issue in Chapter 8.

For a long time, rising powers' defensive stances found resonance among other Southern partners, as countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America have also kept 'accountability issues' outside the global tables or behind closed doors. While the decision on the part of the other partner to problematise, or not, certain accountability issues is unique to each South-South partnership, here I indicate two important common factors. First, as mentioned earlier, low(er) income countries had their own critiques to the 'aid accountability agenda'. Second, from a governmental perspective, both sides publicly upheld the official SSC narratives of solidarity and horizontality and the promises of non-conditional development cooperation and more equitable 'win-win relationships' that, at least to some elite groups brokering the agreements, could deliver mutual material and political gains (Mohan 2014; Horn 2018). Rather than calling for accountability in SSC, several Southern partners denounced the 'double standards' used against rising powers arguing the debate about them was often 'partisan and paternalistic' (Chenoy and Joshi 2016, 107) and that rising powers' involvement (and 'aid competition' more broadly) was actually welcome (Kagame 2009; S. Moyo, Jha and Yeros 2019).

These dynamics help explaining why the topic was largely kept outside formal global diplomatic tables. It remained absent from the G77+China stances at the UN, strongly populated with 'litigious' language of 'tort and reparation' (J. Ferguson 2002, 563).[151] It also remained largely absent from UNDCF discussions and monitoring systems, since the focus of debates remained North-South mutual accountability (Ocampo and Arteaga 2014; Bracho 2017). Unlike DAC's and GPEDC's monitoring mechanisms—that include disaggregated, country-specific, data—UNDCF surveys on mutual accountability and transparency did not attempt, so far, to hold SSC providers accountable for 'efficiency or effectiveness' in a singularised manner.[152]

[150] In a similar metaphorical way, Kenkel and Destradi (2019) characterise the issues as rising powers' 'ambivalent responses' to the so-called Spiderman ethic that with great power comes great responsibilities.
[151] Here I use Ferguson's discussions of African citizens' individual calls for extended 'membership' in global society and apply it to African and other G77+China countries diplomatic language as well.
[152] At the time of this writing, it seems like the GPEDC is moving forward with its first 'country-led pilots to assess the effectiveness of South-South Cooperation'. The countries that volunteered to take this exercise forward are Colombia, El Salvador, Rwanda, Indonesia and Myanmar. The researcher was given access to an unpublished, still under negotiation, version of the Concept Note for this exercise being led by the government of Colombia.

Notwithstanding its importance, this apparent acquiescence should not be overstated. Rather there are at least three ways to complexify the current notion of a 'common Southern aversion' to SSC accountability issues. First, the absence of *explicit* debates should be seen against the backdrop of (hidden) power dynamics within the South and the ways rising powers tended to speak 'on behalf of the South' in global arenas and set the agendas and the terms of the debate of their 'benign/beneficial' presence. Second, one has to consider the often overlooked but decisive agency in national governments and subnational actors in the other Southern partner and their own political calculations of whether/when to enter the public global blaming-game with their 'brothers and sisters' and whether/when to make large Southern providers comply with local regulations and/or international standards (Laporte 2017; Yeophantong 2020).[153] Representatives from other Southern partners I encountered during fieldwork had many thoughts on 'effectiveness', 'mutual accountability' or 'reporting' in SSC, which they shared, albeit cautiously and preferably in smaller 'discussion tables', such as in the course of policy dialogues.[154]

Second, while recognising the 'performative function' of SSC principles in obscuring power asymmetries within and across the South (Aneja 2018, 150), there are also signs that this tacit agreement might be changing in the more recent years. This is visible in policy spaces other than the more formal and/or larger global 'tables'. In Africa, the African Union has made explicit its will to bring 'emerging donors/partners' and their actions into greater alignment with Africa's Agenda 2063 (Six 2009; Alden 2019).[155] Certain accountability-related debates also became more frequent at the national level with the increasing domestic politicisation of South-South relations with rising powers, mainly China but also Brazil in the case of Mozambique and Angola. In Zambia, Kenya and Nigeria, for instance, incumbents and opponents have, in the past years, increasingly discussed their relations with China in political and electoral debates, something that became even more visible in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic (The China Africa Project 2019a; 2019b; 2020).[156]

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[153] In the case of China's loans, for instance, Grimm et al. (2011, 22) argued that 'information could be provided by borrowing governments, who, it seems, prefer not to publish the details of their Chinese deals'. Recent research on Indian dam-building in Africa, through Exim Bank LOCs, and other development finance arrangements in neighbouring countries, like Nepal, provide initial insights (and a fertile ground for further exploration) into the increased agency by national and local governments in negotiating with Indian SSC bureaucracies and contractors the adoption of certain socio-environmental international standards (personal communication with Udisha Saklani, 2020).

[154] In one of these 'tables' I attended, a Mozambican diplomat framed the issue as follows: *"From a Mozambican perspective there are both global and national accountability challenges. At the global level, lack of data on SSC and lack of reporting SSC flows in a systematic way. This engenders a risk of not considering lessons learned with traditional aid. Nationally, Mozambique has a database with aid flows, fed by traditional partners. But Southern partners do not contribute to those same databases".* These views are also present in interviews done with a range of SSC practitioners in the context of project evaluations I took part in the last years (ASUL/Move 2017; ASUL 2020).

[155] The UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa has also been active in promoting this debate, issuing publications and hosting meetings on alignment of 'new and emerging development partners' to SDGs in Africa and to Africa's Agenda 2063 (OSAA 2010; OSSA and NEPAD 2015; INT-OSS-11).

[156] Covid-19 provides a recent example of more assertive diplomatic stances by African government leaders and politicians, with renewed demonstrations of public discontent with China's treatment of African nationals during the outbreak and calls for renegotiation of African public debts with Beijing. Some analysts even referred to the current unprecedent successive diplomatic friction as 'the end of the China-Africa honeymoon' (Marks 2020; The China Africa Project 2020).

Third, going deeper into subnational politics, breaches 'from within' in the initial consensus can be seen in the growing civil society activism taking place across Southern countries. Examples include the cross-regional civil society campaign 'No to ProSavana campaign' to halt this triangular agriculture development programme involving Brazil, Japan and Mozambique or the less impactful transnational mobilisation against land-grabbing by Indian companies in Ethiopia. Transnational social mobilisation, with variable rates of success including some stalled projects, also took place around Chinese infrastructure building, including anti-dam mobilisation in the Mekong region and legal/para-legal activism around a logistical-development corridor in Lamu, Kenya, as I will discuss in Chapter 7.[157] All together these examples contribute to nuancing the diplomatic 'silence or acquiescence' in global arenas and point to other forms of accountability politics that can expand in the years to come.

As accountability was *de facto* inserted in the agenda, either against the will or with little support of rising powers, their defensive positions slowly started to coexist with an openness to engage with certain aspects of the topic, notably its counting and managerial dimensions, in critical yet innovative ways. Relying once more on differentiation arguments, a set of knowledge, policy and institutional accountability innovations started to populate SSC policy and academic circles. The paper by T. Kim and Lim (2017) on 'soft accountability' for 'unlikely SSC settings', discussed in Chapter 1, coincides with this surge in policy debates, experimentations and customisations of accountability mechanisms to SSC in a clear sign of Southern academics' participation in the construction of differentiation narratives around SSC accountability (as they did with SSC differentiation narratives in the early days).

At the diplomatic and para-diplomatic level, oppositional narratives were joined by more conciliatory discourses and strategies. The year of 2013 is a landmark in the creation of new policy spaces where Southern governmental and knowledge actors could meet and discuss SSC norms, institutions and practices.[158] Among the new fora one finds the Core Group of Southern Partners within ECOSOC, the first Delhi Process (a political-academic dialogue on SSC hosted by the Indian quasi-governmental think

[157] Digital activism is another growing form of social mobilisation and subnational politics happening in and around SSC. A very recent example is found in the public outrage over mistreatment of Africans in China during the Covid-19 pandemic and its unprecedent (and still unfolding) ramifications in terms of transnational civil society, parliamentary and diplomatic mobilisation across Africa to denounce a perceived unfairness and exploitation in China-Africa relations (Change.org 2020; The China Africa Project 2020).

[158] The surge in initiatives around 2013 can be also see as a response from certain large SSC providers, including Brazil, China and India (and a sign of their discomfort) to the growing attempts from the OECD to create an 'equator-less' universal partnership for global development, the GPEDC, formally constituted in 2012.

tank RIS),[159] and the creation of the Network of Southern Think Tanks (NeST), gathering scholars from Brazil, India, China, South Africa and Mexico.[160]

These new spaces contributed to a shift during the course of the 2010s whereby differentiation as a defensive strategy started to coexist with another approach: *differentiated integration*.[161] Similar to what Leveringhaus and Estrada (2018) characterised as India and China's 'innovation strategies' in the nuclear regime, this approach seeks a compromise between harmonisation and resistance and echoes recognition, autonomy and status-seeking strategies by rising powers. Through differentiated integration, I contend, Brazil, China and India sought for a certain degree of convergence with the DAC-led normative order while, at the same time, projected their alternative identities both as Southern partners and as rising powers. Characterising rising powers' behaviour as manifestations of their will to integrate *differently* helps understanding rising powers' subsequent engagement and active promotion of diplomatic and knowledge battles over accountability, and notably over measurement, and their shift from openly stated blockages to alternative forms of contestation based on a set of 'doing our way' practices.

Several development actors within *Aidland*, through participating in these same battles and negotiating SSC accountability with Southern actors, have also come to accept that SSC accountability could be thought and done differently. Mutual socialisation, as observed by IR scholars across several international policy domains, is happening within triangular development cooperation where Southern providers and 'traditional' donors have been experimenting other ways of doing and evaluating SSC (see Chapters 4 and 5). Mutual socialisation, and even 'Southernisation', is also occurring within the OECD-DAC reporting system, for instance when new and/or smaller European donors (whose 'donor identity' is often closer to Latin Americans than to major DAC donors) chose to report technical cooperation along Southern providers' lines.[162] However, despite a growing shared recognition of the need to practice accountability in a 'SSC-appropriate way', the debate remained fractured over lines of accountability to be prioritised, the nature of certain SSC providers and their cooperation modalities, and over common and differentiated norms and tools to do/perform accountability, making measurement, among all coexisting problematisations, a major global battlefield, as I will show in the next chapter.

[159] The Delhi Process was set-up in 2013 as a 'track-two' diplomacy space, hosted by RIS, for Southern knowledge and policy actors to exchange views on SSC. Since its inception, representatives from certain international organisations and from 'like-minded' institutions based in Northern donors (including the German DiE, UNOSSC and the OECD Development Centre) have been invited, albeit they remained a minority. After six editions, the Delhi Process has become one of the major global para-diplomatic spaces for debates around SSC, while being one convened and curated by one country: India. For more on the Delhi Process, see Chapters 4 and 6.

[160] Mexico representatives had initially no seat in global NeST steering committee although Mexican scholars have been active in the network since the beginning. This can be explained by the reservations expressed by other scholars during the founding negotiations regarding Mexican government own hybrid identities as a 'Southern partner' and its proximity with the OECD-DAC. Mexican scholars, together with Argentinian scholars, have, however, full visibility in the NeST LATAM chapter, created more recently in 2019 to host debates among countries from Latin America.

[161] The concept has been widely utilised in the context of the Europe Union integration. For a discussion on integration and stigma in the EU context, see Adler-Nissen (2014).

[162] INT-ODP-4.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an historical and analytical account of how accountability became a substantial concern within *Aidland* and the ways different actors (donors, recipients, transnational civil society and domestic stakeholders) have understood and disputed the concept and how to practice it. In this account, I described how the rise of accountability—as a multi-layered and contested issue—has led throughout the 2000s to multiple and overlapping reforms to improve aid practices and 'fix' aid relations that progressively converged into a managerial and efficiency understanding of 'aid accountability'. In this prevailing construction, perceptions of accountability *deficits* in Southern recipients and aid organisations, and the global and domestic reforms they have entailed, have strongly responded to broader neoliberal policy management changes in donor countries. Reforms tried to 'fix' accountability through building mechanisms and tools to show or perform accountability to certain publics within donor countries, trumping accountability towards Southern partners, and often reducing accountability to counting aid flows and/or creating transparency infrastructures. However, and despite the prevalent technocratic-managerial approaches, I have also suggested the re-politicising effects of debates, reforms and tools, through creating openings and new political arenas to discuss and contest aid relations and their outcomes.

Still on aid accountability, the chapter highlighted importance of the OECD-DAC and its institutional robustness for accountability norms and behaviour-setting in the field. While this backbone was historically backed by the US hegemony, and by the active role of large donors, such as the UK, it also created a fiction of DAC members' full compliance with 'donorship' norms. This fiction is a key element in reinforcing a 'North-South divide' when it comes to practicing development cooperation accountability. This divide hardens the boundaries of what accountability means and how is practiced by 'traditional' donors and creates a powerful discursive tool (for governments within *Aidland* and for a range of civil society groups in the South and elsewhere) to hold SSC practitioners to a set of, still internally contested, standards on how development providers should behave and justify their acts.

Concerning the emerging problematisations of accountability in/of SSC, this chapter argued that growing concerns with transparency of SSC flows and with SSC providers' compliance with 'donorship' norms are situated within broader and ongoing geopolitical disputes and negotiations between DAC donors and rising powers over their role, status and responsibilities in global affairs. It further suggested that other problematisations—including contestations of SSC initiatives on the ground by domestic actors and 'aid monitoring movements'—have also emerged but remained less visible in global diplomatic arenas than issues related to large Southern providers' harmonisation with 'donorship' norms, including measurement. Lastly, this chapter also started to unpack how in the last decade rising powers have changed from an open opposition to the issue of accountability in/of SSC to a will to discuss it in its own terms. The diplomatic

and para-diplomatic shift towards experimenting with conceptualising and practicing accountability in SSC, notably on measurement issues, not only challenges simplistic assumptions that rising powers are not interested or capable to integrate accountability in their development cooperation, but also reveals a range of ongoing geopolitical and domestic politics negotiations happening within and across large SSC providers like Brazil, China and India to carve their own differentiated integration in this field.

4. From accountability to countability: South-South cooperation measurement politics

This chapter shows how measurement became a politically salient issue in global disputes over accountability in/of SSC. Examining unfolding sociotechnical-political battles over the quantification and reporting of SSC flows and over the assessment of SSC impact,[163] this chapter locates contemporary SSC accountability politics within broader North-South (mutual) socialisation and differentiation dynamics as well as within knowledge and power dynamics current playing out in the development field.

Using the 2019 UN BAPA+40 Conference, and the diplomatic and para-diplomatic negotiations taking place before and after the conference, I show emerging disputes over SSC accountability in global policy spaces as signs of the diplomatic reluctance and resistance of Southern providers—notably rising powers—to be co-opted into existing ODA measurement norms, standards and practices. Unfolding negotiations, I posit, reveal a recent and growing agency by the governments of Brazil, China and India—but also knowledge actors in the three countries—to debate SSC measurement, so as to internationally showcase and stage 'success' and find alternative and more favourable 'Southern-grown' ways to practicing development cooperation accountability. Finally, I show how measurement debates, and even battles, have generated 'measurement paradoxes' to Southern providers.

The chapter is divided as follows. The first section discusses how measurement of SSC has progressively occupied the centre of global debates, using the example of BAPA+40 as a microcosmos of unfolding disputes. The second section examines how rising powers, through differentiation strategies, have resisted, experimented and innovated in quantifying, reporting and assessing SSC. This section also shows how major SSC partners have created measurement tools with 'Southern characteristics' while navigating multiple measurement paradoxes. Finally, the third section places existing measurement politics in the context of broader accountability negotiations unfolding between rising powers and multiple international publics.

[163] Scholars and practitioners refer to 'measurement', 'quantification', 'reporting' and 'monitoring and evaluation' in different and often conflicting ways. Analytically, I have decided to use the term *measurement* as the broader category, as to account for this diversity of measuring debates in light of existing scholarship work on social measures, including in international development (see Chapter 1). I have also differentiated 'quantification and reporting' from 'monitoring and evaluation', as speaking to two separate but inter-related practices and debates currently unfolding in SSC.

From Nairobi to BAPA+40: how measurement entered the room

As examined in Chapter 3, measuring aid is a defining feature of how accountability is practiced within *Aidland*. In the 2010s, as many Southern countries kept 'moving up the development ladder' and the Agenda 2030 for 'universal development' was adopted, new measurement politics emerged: How to shift from 'income per capita' and the 'graduation models' for measuring development and define who could/should benefit from development cooperation? How to reform the ODA concept and its metrics? How to account for private development finance? And, of particularly interest here, how to count development cooperation flows coming from 'Non-DAC' countries like Brazil, China and India?

Nairobi and the birth of the measurement paradox

The 2009 Nairobi outcome document is a useful starting point to investigate emerging SSC measurement politics. Far from just another UN 'anodyne event' (Gosovic 2009), the first UN High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation, held in the Kenya in 2009, marks an important step in the consolidation of SSC agenda within the UN. In Nairobi, SSC narratives were updated to a (post) post-Cold War setting and to a global landscape marked by the MDGs agenda and by OECD-led agreements on effectiveness.[164] Nairobi reflected therefore these changes and the historically possible compromise between different constituencies, whose divergent views were quickly widening.

The Nairobi agreement contains several of G77+China differentiation claims around SSC, stressing that SSC is 'not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation' (UNGA 2009, para. 14). It introduces, nonetheless, an intra-South differentiation that echoed the increasingly self-evident gap between 'small and large' Southern partners and between 'small and big SSC' (Bracho 2017). In Nairobi, UN members 'recognize[d] the solidarity of middle-income countries with other developing countries with a view to supporting their development efforts, including in the context of South-South and triangular cooperation' (para. 7). As mentioned in Chapter 3, the document also featured for the first time issues of 'accountability' and 'development effectiveness' in SSC (para. 18). This was followed by a paragraph on measurement (para. 20, c), see Box 2 below.

[164] Anecdotally, it was only in 2003 that the UN General Assembly decided to replace the term 'Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries – TCDC' (used during throughout the Cold War) in favour of the broader concept of 'South-South Cooperation' in all the UN system.

Box 2 – Excerpts from the Nairobi Outcome Document

> *In that regard, we acknowledge the need to enhance the development effectiveness of South-South cooperation by continuing to increase its mutual accountability and transparency, as well as coordinating its initiatives with other development projects and programmes on the ground, in accordance with national development plans and priorities. We also recognize that the impact of South-South cooperation should be assessed with a view to improving, as appropriate, its quality in a results-oriented manner.* (para. 18).
>
> *Encourage developing countries to develop country-led systems to evaluate and assess the quality and impact of South-South and triangular cooperation programmes and improve data collection at the national level to promote cooperation in the development of methodologies and statistics to this end, as appropriate, while bearing in mind the specific principles and unique characteristics of South-South cooperation, and encourage all actors to support initiatives for information and data collection, coordination, dissemination and evaluation of South-South cooperation, upon the request of developing countries.* (para. 20, c).

With the formal entry of accountability, effectiveness and measurement concerns in SSC inter-governmental negotiations, Nairobi marks the first successful 'attempt to introduce SSC partnerships into the "donorship doxa"' (Zoccal and Esteves 2018, 135). This was, nonetheless, a modest attempt both in the language adopted (Pino 2014) and in light of the subsequent failure to unequivocally bring rising powers under the 'Effectiveness Agenda' tent. Rising powers never formally joined the 'equator-less' GPEDC, refrained from committing to any financial target for their SSC efforts, and remained sceptical about the efforts to devise new 'universal' metrics, such as TOSSD (Bracho 2017; Besharati 2017).

Nonetheless, having 'effectiveness language' in Nairobi's outcome document contributed to engender a *measurement paradox* that would accompany SSC in the next decade. The paradox goes as follows: on the one hand, measuring development cooperation can enable Southern providers to reduce the information gap around SSC and substantiate their claims that SSC is generating the development impact that traditional aid had largely failed to achieve.[165] On the other, the need to measure creates a 'trap', a term I borrow from one interviewee, putting on Southern providers the burden to proof that SSC was not only *different* but also *more*

[165] Exemplifying this rationale, the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) portrays measurement of SSC as an opportunity to 'validate the political discourse that proposes this method as a low-cost, direct-impact, effective, efficient and beneficial way for cooperation' (PIFCSS 2016a cited in Escallón 2019). SEGIB is neither a purely Latin American nor a Southern international organisation since it includes the 22 countries that make up the 'Ibero-American community' (the 19 Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries in Latin America and those of the Iberian Peninsula, Spain, Portugal and Andorra). See https://www.segib.org/en/who-we-are/ (last access: 21/10/2020).

effective than aid.[166] As a trap, measurement also opens the very SSC political project to challenge, questioning the validity of its claims. As I heard from another development expert: 'As a new modality and to be taken seriously, SSC needs to show evidence'.[167] Ultimately, the measurement paradox not only inserts SSC into existing development evidence politics but does so in particular ways: adding an additional geopolitical layer. As framed by Besharati and MacFeely (2019, 4) in a UNCTAD policy brief: 'SSC is no longer a side-show. Better data is now required to accurately tell the story of South-South cooperation. If the global South doesn't come up with its own definitions and measures, others (most likely in the North) will continue to produce most of the analysis around SSC'.

The tensions generated by the measurement paradox only grew in the aftermath of Nairobi and as the debates on the Agenda 2030 progressed. Some practitioners in large Southern providers talked about 'SSC contributions to the SDGs' (Corrêa 2017; Waisbich, Silva and Suyama 2017), seeing SSC measurement in the context of SDGs' total accounting as an opportunity to boost SSC 'doxic battles' (Esteves and Assunção 2014). In this script, measurement served rising powers' status-seeking and reputation-building strategies by showcasing their efforts, generosity and successes to international audiences. Concurrently, several in *SSC-land* also vocalised discomfort with the agenda, illustrated in narratives such as: 'It makes no sense to discuss evaluation of SSC with ODA standards and tools'; 'One cannot evaluate all dimensions of SSC, since SSC goes beyond grants and monetary transfers'; 'Monitoring and evaluating SSC is burdensome to national bureaucracies, including in partners countries'; or 'Monitoring and evaluating SSC is very expensive to small technical cooperation projects' (see, for instance, Corrêa 2017; M. Chakrabarti 2018; Li 2018; UNESCAP 2019).

These discourses highlight diplomats, practitioners and experts' anxieties on at least four levels. First, with *the need to* measure and a fear measurement could underplay, and even undermine, the political dimension of SSC. Second, with applying ODA metrics and tools to measure a different form of development exchange: SSC. Third, with overly relying on financial quantification methodologies that could rank SSC providers 'too low' among development providers while revealing 'too much' information thus generating unwanted domestic pressure. Fourth, with the fact that, among all institutionalisation reforms, measurement was seldom a priority for often overburden and understaffed SSC bureaucracies.[168]

Incentives and concerns with measurement played out simultaneously for Brazil, China and India. While the particular domestic manifestations will be examined in Chapters 5 and 6, here I engage with distinct diplomatic and para-diplomatic stances that illustrate rising powers' *resistance and engagement* with the agenda.

[166] INT-OSS-4.
[167] INT-BR-65.
[168] INT-OSS-3; INT-IN-8; INT-IN-9; INT-CH-4.

In the next sub-section, I discuss the BAPA+40 Conference as a microcosmos and a 'diagnosis event'[169] for these stances and for unfolding global disputes around measuring SSC.[170]

'It takes two to tango': measurement battles in BAPA+40

Between 2018-2019, eyes in *SSC-land* turned to the Second UN High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation (or BAPA+40), held in Buenos Aires, in March 2019, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action. In the road to BAPA+40, the convening UN body—the UNDP-managed Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)—presented as key conference goals the need to 'institutionalise' and 'revitalise' SSC within the UN and to decisively link it to the SDGs agenda (UNGA 2018). Aligned with these goals, the UN preparatory note highlighted the need to enhance 'reporting on South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation on the national and regional levels on a voluntary basis and in accordance with their national capacities' (ibid).

In light of the broader North-South politics and the fragile state of UN multilateralism of the last decade (Zoccal 2020), the BAPA+40 outcome document was pre-negotiated in New York ahead of the actual high-level conference.[171] The Argentinian government and UNOSSC led the negotiations in a cautious way, proposing a Zero Draft containing what was perceived as 'non-controversial topics', as framed by one interviewee: SSC scaling-up, institutionalisation and 'best practices'.[172] Measurement issues were explicitly left out from the initial draft. Having agreed on the document in New York, made the official meeting in Buenos Aires a celebration event and a networking space for those in *SSC-land* to showcase their interest and achievements with South-South and triangular cooperation.[173] Alongside the official closed 3-day meeting, BAPA+40 featured 140 side-events open to the general public.[174]

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[169] Similar analytical efforts have been conducted in other landmark global development meetings, namely the 2011 Busan Conference (Eyben and Savage 2013; Mawdsley, Savage and Sung-Mi 2014). For more of aid-related 'diagnosis events', see Jensen and Winthereik (2013).

[170] The reflections are based on discursive analysis of the 'road towards BAPA+40', with the preparatory events and meetings hosted from 2017 to 2019, the UN-documentation and other commentaries published on the matter, the conduct and debates at the meeting itself, the official outcome document (the BAPA+40 outcome document) and other meetings and analysis produced immediately after the BAPA+40, during the year of 2019.

[171] Negotiations took place within the UN General Assembly, in New York, between December 2018 and February 2019, thus ahead of the formal conference in March 2019, in Buenos Aires. They produced a Zero Draft (dated from January 22nd 2019), a second draft (dated from February 11th 2019),and a third and final agreed upon draft, transmitted in March 6th 2019 to the President of the General Assembly two weeks before the actual conference in Buenos Aires (UN 2019a; 2019b; 2019c).

[172] INT-OSS-2.

[173] BAPA+40 conference was at the same time a 'high-level' but 'low-profile' event: with 145 member states attending, but only 8 heads of states, 2 deputy-prime-ministers and 61 ministers. BAPA+40 also gathered representatives of 23 IOs, 13 specialised agencies and representatives of NGOs, the private sector and academia (UNGA 2019b).

[174] Side events were hosted by states, UN agencies, NGOs and knowledge organisations (think-thanks, research centres, universities) and covered a range of topics: from agriculture and health to peace operations and counter-terrorism, digging into practical and conceptual discussions, unpacking past and future dimensions of bilateral, regional, sub-regional, South-South and trilateral cooperation. See the final side-event list at https://www.unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/BAPA40-Side-Event-Schedule-19_mar_2019.pdf (last access 04.04.2019).

Many traditional development actors and some Southern experts (notably from Brazil, Mexico and South Africa) hoped that the BAPA+40 process would generate the right conditions for Southern providers to agree on a unambiguous definition of SSC and on goals, targets and means to financially commit to achieve the Agenda 2030 (Esteves and Klingebiel 2018; EU 2019). They also expected a commonly agreed definition to finally enable more systematic efforts of quantification of cooperation flows between developing countries (Besharati and MacFeely 2019). Such agreements were, nonetheless, not achieved.

Despite the high hopes, BAPA+40 only secured the minimum-common possible. This resulted not only from the document being agreed upon among Northern and Southern countries, but also from the lack of firm political leadership by large SSC providers, including Brazil, China and India, to advance on more ambitious normative frameworks for SSC.[175] There was, one the one hand, a widespread (comforting) recognition of the diversity within the South and the constrains that a 'multiplex world' impose on multilateral negotiations (Acharya 2017). On the other hand, several 'SSC champions' were too busy with domestic turmoil (e.g., Brazil, South Africa and Venezuela), too uncertain of the strategic value of investing additional diplomatic efforts in negotiating SSC at the UN (e.g., China), or too wary of a 'dilution' of SSC essence, including through UN pushes for 'mainstreaming' triangular cooperation (e.g., India).[176] Most countries seemed satisfied with a thin consensus and the prolongation of ambiguous policy discourses at the UN, one that 'facilitates and helps maintain consensus, and conceals ideological differences, setting limits to the struggles over meaning' (Mosse 2005, 36).

A discursive analysis of the final outcome document alongside its earlier drafts offers insights into the current political agreements and divergences on measuring SSC. If Nairobi can be thought, borrowing Mawdsley's (2019) chronology, as the crystallisation of 'SSC 2.0' dynamics at the UN, BAPA+40 embodied 'SSC 3.0'. BAPA+40 aligned SSC to the SDGs-lingo and inserted it into major 21st century global development consensus around infrastructure building, the role of private sector in development cooperation and triangular cooperation. Yet, when it comes to language on commitments, responsibilities and accountability, BAPA+40 offered yet another illustration of what observers had been calling a normative 'race to the bottom' (Mawdsley 2014a; Alexander and Kornegay 2014). Northern donors were successful in securing no explicit mention to the 0.7% ODA/GNI target in the final document.[177] At the

[175] China sent a high-profile delegation, with the vice-prime minister and the deputy-minister of Agriculture. CIDCA Chairman, Wang Xiaotao, also attended the conference. The Indian delegation was headed by the Indian ambassador to the UN and the Brazilian delegation by MRE's Undersecretary General for International Cooperation, Trade Promotion and Cultural Themes. ABC's director, Ruy Perreira, was also present. Brazilian participation was particularly low-profile, due to the unfolding crisis and fears of reprisals by the newly elected Bolsonaro government. The Brazilian delegation was decided in the last minute and acted in a low-profile manner. MRE did very little dissemination around the event in its own communication channels. Most Brazilian delegates were from ABC itself and almost none from Brazilian traditional implementing agencies. Insiders to the process indicated MRE had initially planned a smaller delegation, but increased its participation after being insistently asked by the Argentinians.

[176] An example of concerns within India over triangular cooperation at the time of BAPA+40 can be found in RIS-published piece by Milindo Chakrabarti (2019).

[177] The absence, which is a symbolic retreat, is credited to a veto by the US during the negotiations, according to insiders to the processes.

same time, Southern providers ensured that paragraphs 25 and 29 on 'mutual accountability' and 'impact assessments' were an *ipsis literis* copy of paragraphs 18 and 20 from Nairobi (quoted above), showing no diplomatic conceptual-normative advances in a decade.

While responsibilities were off the negotiations table, the terms 'methodology/methodologies' featured in the document. In Buenos Aires, countries acknowledged the importance of measuring, reporting and assessing the impact of SSC while noting this would not be done through a common framework, but rather through 'voluntary', 'non-binding' and 'country-led systems':

> *In this regard, we invite interested developing countries to engage in consultations, within the regional commissions of the United Nations, relevant intergovernmental fora on South-South and triangular cooperation, or regional organizations, as appropriate, on non-binding voluntary methodologies, building upon existing experiences, taking into account the specificities and different modalities of South-South cooperation and respecting the diversity within South-South cooperation and within national approaches. In this regard, we take note of the efforts of certain developing countries that have developed methodologies for planning, monitoring, measuring and evaluating South-South and triangular cooperation in their regions on a voluntary basis and acknowledge the interest of some developing countries in order to establish a methodology for accounting and evaluating South-South and triangular cooperation.* (UNGA 2019a, para.26).

This paragraph encapsulates several of the ongoing epistemic and geopolitical battles around measuring SSC. The invitation wording, combined with the stress on 'non-binding voluntary methodologies' respectful of the 'diversity of SSC approaches', are clear markers of persistent unease with the topic. The paragraph reiterates relatively stable diplomatic stances by Southern providers on the matter from the past decade, emphasising: (i) the autonomy of Southern countries to develop SSC-specific evaluation and assessment systems; (ii) the respect of the uniqueness, plurality and diversity of SSC and SSC partners; and (iii) the demand-driven, Southern-led, flexible nature of these accounting and reflection exercises. Key-terms, such as 'autonomy', 'plurality', 'diversity' and 'flexibility', are easily traced in other diplomatic statements and scholarly reflections on the topic. For instance, in an opinion piece published by the South African Institute of International Affairs, a NeST member, Turiansky (2017) argued that: 'the North calls for increased transparency, improved indicators and reliable statistics, but the South asks to respect its diversity of approaches'. Brazil, China and India's official statements during the Conference also feature these terms, as shown in Box 3, below.

Box 3 - Excerpts from diplomatic statements by Brazil, China and India during BAPA+40

Brazil – 'We needed to evaluate what has been achieved in the last decades and define, by consensus, the guidelines for the coming years. (…) Brazil is aware of the sensitivity raised by issues of measurement and evaluation of South-South cooperation. We understand that developing countries have the prerogative to *voluntarily* design and validate harmonised methodologies for the quantification and evaluation of South-South cooperation (...) We also note with great satisfaction the emphasis placed by the conference on triangular cooperation. We have been and will continue to be favourable to maintaining *flexible* conceptual and operational structures for this modality, whose enormous potential remains unexplored. We want to further enhance the enormous comparative advantages of each of the partners. Therefore, we must avoid adopting rigid conceptual and management frameworks for trilateral cooperation'. [Our translation and our emphasis][1]

(Ambassador Ruy Pereira, Director, Brazilian Cooperation Agency)

China – 'South-South Cooperation is there to complement, not to substitute, North-South Cooperation. In the grand scheme of international development cooperation, North-South Cooperation remains the primary channel. That being the case, developed countries should honour their ODA commitments in good faith with more tangible actions. As a useful complement to North-South Cooperation, South-South Cooperation does also have an active role to play. But instead of replicating the principles and criteria of North-South Cooperation, it should be grounded in reality and pushed ahead in an independent and *flexible* manner (…) Like the rest of the developing world, China is also confronted with daunting development related challenges. China's development has benefited from the support and cooperation of the international community. We are also ready to do what we can, to the best of our ability, to shoulder such responsibilities as commensurate with our stage of development and our actual capacity by working hand in hand with other countries to build a community of shared future for humankind (…) We shall optimize the modalities of assistance to make it more effective. In order to further step up international assistance, the China International Development Cooperation Agency was established last year. Leveraging our advantages, we shall remain focused on such priority sectors as poverty reduction, agriculture, health, infrastructure, skills training and education, and help ensure that assistance funds are better spent, with due attention to financial sustainability. We are happy to share our development experience with the recipient countries, help them improve their people's livelihood and enhancetheir self-reliant development capacity in a tangible way' [Our emphasis]

(H.E. Mr. Hu Chunhua Vice Premier, State Council, P.R.China, at the Second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation)

India – 'The cardinal principle that underpins South-South cooperation has been and remains that sharing valuable capacities, experience and knowledge amongst developing countries can be a catalyst for development. It does not substitute or supplant but only supplements North-South cooperation. (…) Over the last decade, India has extended Lines of Credit of about US $ 25 billion to more than 60 countries of the South. All projects follow universally recognized norms. They do not create unsustainable debt burdens and ensure skill & technology transfer to help local communities maintain and sustain assets created. (…) More and better South-South Cooperation now is on account of the global South enjoying more rapid and sustained economic growth. Yet, South-South Cooperation retains its distinct nature and values, as well as *diversity* of forms and flows. It defies easy categorization. (…) The trajectory of global growth and the declining share of ODA during the last decade or so has seen attempts to subsume South-South cooperation in the international aid architecture. Such efforts are not helpful. They do no justice to either its historical heritage or its future potential. Let us not venture to strait jacket South-South cooperation into a format that it cannot fit into'. [Our emphasis]

(Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, Second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation)

[1] The excerpts from the original statement delivered in Spanish, reads: '*Necesitábamos evaluar lo que se ha logrado en las últimas décadas y definir, de manera consensuada, las orientaciones para los próximos años. (…) Por otra parte, Brasil es consciente de la sensibilidad que suscitan las cuestiones de medición y evaluación de la cooperación Sur-Sur. Entendemos que los países en desarrollo tienen la prerrogativa de diseñar y validar, de forma voluntaria, metodologías armonizadas para la cuantificación y evaluación de la cooperación Sur-Sur (…) También observamos con gran satisfacción el énfasis puesto por la conferencia en la cooperación triangular. Hemos sido y seguiremos siendo favorables al mantenimiento de estructuras conceptuales y operativas flexibles para esta modalidad, cuyo enorme potencial sigue sin explorarse. Queremos mejorar aún más las enormes ventajas comparativas de cada uno de los socios. Por lo tanto, debemos evitar adoptar marcos conceptuales y de gestión rígidos para la cooperación trilateral*'.

Source: Authors' compilation

Paragraph 26 strongly echoes abovementioned concerns from larger Southern providers about being measured by others and with others' tools and standards. Indeed, in the past decade, OECD reports started to include estimates on flows of 'Non-DAC' providers including Brazil, China and India (OECD 2015).[178] The OECD used Brazil' official statistics and have added other ODA-like flows. Consequently, its estimates differed from the figures Brazil published in what is known as the *Cobradi* report (see Chapter 5). Likewise, *AidData* estimates of China's development cooperation also differed from China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) figures, prompting responses from Beijing. MOFCOM's spokesperson, following the release of *AidData's* Global Chinese Official Finance Dataset, in 2017, stated that: 'The report probably has confused Chinese foreign aid funds with all kinds of other funds, including commercial funds' (cited in Rudyak 2017).

Marcio Côrrea, senior expert at ABC, expressed a similar discomfort arguing that: 'Developing countries have been witnessing other international actors trying to quantify horizontal/South-South flows based on criteria conceived for other realities and purposes. The consequences of this process are: under-accounting, unilateral segregation of data, or inaccurate classification of horizontal/South-South cooperation' (ABC 2015; Corrêa 2017). Concerns have been also vocalised by Indian experts, such as Milindo Chakrabarti (2019, 49) from RIS, when arguing for: 'The idea [of SSC] not be caged into some defined templates and lead to potential death by strangulation'.

Importantly, paragraph 26 did not close-off the discussions on measurement methodologies or common frameworks. The final lines refer to 'ongoing national and regional experimentation', recognising (without naming) efforts such as those taking place in Latin America, in countries like Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico, and under the umbrella of international organisations such as the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) (Silva et al. 2016; Esteves 2018; Chaturvedi 2018).

Insiders to BAPA+40 negotiations largely credit Indian diplomacy for resisting stronger commitments to measurement. The second draft included, for instance, an entire section on 'monitoring and reporting' that received wide support from traditional donors but was dropped during the negotiations (EU 2019b).[179]

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[178] The OECD also estimates flows from: Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Qatar, South Africa, some of which send their data voluntary to the OECD. See https://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/non-dac-reporting.htm.

[179] Paragraphs 32 and 33 from this draft read: *'32. We invite Member States to consider voluntary reporting on the South-South and triangular cooperation activities, during the regular sessions of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, that will facilitate peer-learning and the exchange of experiences and good practices, including lessons learned and challenges, as well as the promotion of South-South and triangular partnerships. 33. We request the Secretary-General with the support of UNOSSC to develop methodologies and other relevant tools that would enable Member States, United Nations organizations and other relevant stakeholders to gather and provide data and information on the implementation of these Outcome Documents and to report such information on a voluntary basis to the biennial sessions of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, to the General Assembly via the annual report on the state of South-South cooperation and to the High-level Political Forum as appropriate'.*

India's blocking does not come as a surprise considering its historical intellectual leadership within the G77+China and the language employed in country's statement during BAPA+40 (see Box 3, above).

Indian-sponsored side-events in Buenos Aires, all led by RIS, also clearly echoed these concerns. While presenting itself as an independent think tank, RIS sits in a para-statal capacity and its thinking has historically backed Indian governmental stances on development cooperation (Chaturvedi et al. 2014). RIS has also been a major source of critical-resistant stances on SSC accountability and measurement, although in a pragmatic and adaptative way. During BAPA+40, RIS hosted a parallel event on 'The Plurality of South-South Cooperation' and another on 'Exploring Asian Narratives on South-South Cooperation'.[180] The notions of 'plurality' and 'diversity' the have been strategically mobilised by RIS scholars to justify Indian's opposition to common standards for SSC and a single metric to count SSC flows (M. Chakrabarti 2018; Chaturvedi 2019).

A few months after BAPA+40, a renewed open demonstration of resistance appeared in a communiqué by the G77 and China, in a clear move away from the 'conflict-avoiding language'[181] found in the outcome document. In its statement, the Group reiterated its firm will to 'defend' SSC principles (G77 2019a, para. 2) and opposed to the adoption of DAC-tools or any UN top-down measurement of SSC.[182] It also denounced what it perceived as 'double standards', since ODA measuring frameworks were never agreed on wider UN forums.[183]

Based on these accounts of BAPA+40 and its immediate aftermath, one could assume that Southern providers were 'just not interested' in measurement or accountability issues, an expression I once heard from a senior *Aidland* practitioner. However, such a conclusion overlooks several other diplomatic and para-diplomatic moves in the past years in other informal 'global tables', where Southern experts (governmental and non-governmental) have been critically engaging with existing metrics and ways of doing accountability and proposing 'Southern-grown' alternatives. This includes alternative policy debates and experimentations by intergovernmental, governmental and quasi-governmental entities like ABC in Brazil,

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[180] The first side-event was co-hosted with the Brazilian BRICS Policy Centre and the NeST, while the second one with the China Institute for South-South Cooperation in Agriculture (CISSCA) (RIS 2019).

[181] Here I borrow an expression developed by Swyngedouw (2013) when talking about UN water-related documents.

[182] Arguments against the 'top down' measurement and a defence of national 'bottom-up' processes of experimentation with measurement can be also seen in the discussion held in the High-level Forum of Directors General for Development Cooperation in December the same year (UNOSSC 2019). Likewise, the statement openly regretted that the BAPA+40 process somehow marginalised UNCTAD, in yet another illustration of the persisting institutional competition within the UN development system.

[183] An extract of the statement reads: *"The Group of 77 and China remains concerned and strongly oppose attempts to measure, monitor or harmonize with the ODA frameworks, which will not bring more resources for development; but, on the contrary, it will jeopardize the existing diversity of flows. Demands of measurement, monitoring and reporting on South-South Cooperation, will only divert and waste treasured resources for development and the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The Southern countries shall detect and define their own needs regarding monitoring with the aim of improving and learning from their actual experiences. Any attempt to create conceptual frameworks on this field shall derive from the initiative of the involved parties."* (para. 4).

RIS in India or UNDP China, and by transnational knowledge actors like NeST, to be explored in the following section.

'Doing it our way': the politics and the tensions of measuring from the South

'The feeling of we having to be accountable in our own ways is there. It is not a pressure; it is a [self] realisation'
(Indian development expert, New Delhi, 2018, parenthesis added)

'It is true that SSC projects are different, but this do not make them un-assessable. Numerous Brazilian projects are done with public resources (…) We are trying'
(Brazilian development expert, Brasilia, 2018)

As SSC practitioners and experts started to discuss measurement, they did so not only by engaging existing standards, metrics and mechanisms but also disputing their meanings and proposing alternative constructions. The following sub-sections unpack two large sets of geopolitical and epistemic disputes over measuring SSC, the first around quantification and the second around impact assessment, showing how Southern actors have generated and navigated them.

The politics of quantifying and reporting South-South cooperation and Southern-led development finance

In what ways have Southern governments and experts challenged existing quantification standards and practices and what have they proposed instead? Here I explore two quantification-related measurement battles: first, on whether and how to financially quantify SSC flows; and second, on how to count Southern development finance flows.

A first quantification battle is seen in Southern providers and experts' challenges to Aidland's efforts to *financially (or monetarily) quantify SSC*. At the heart of their opposition lies a critique of financial quantification as 'straitjacketing' SSC into being only about financial contributions to development or an additional source of development finance. Brazil and other Latin American countries—to whom technical cooperation (e.g., capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and technology transfer) and in-country support (e.g., scholarships for foreign students and refugee support) are emblematic cooperation modalities—have long championed this critique. They opposed a perceived *Aidland's* 'obsession' with counting financial flows and/or collecting data exclusively on SSC financial resources.[184] Such a move, they argue, oversimplifies SSC nature and

[184] In the context of TOSSD, Besharati (2017) raised a similar concern and denounced what he called the existing 'devils of financial quantification' and the 'obsession' with counting development cooperation financial inputs rather than development outputs.

undervalues its developmental impact: it 'diverts our attention from pursuing development in structural[185] terms (better policies, better capacities and better means) to only look at accessing sources of funding' (ABC 2015). This argument is further developed by Côrrea (2017) to whom 'SSC operational costs' (that can be monetised and thus counted) do not fully account for what is done in South-South knowledge and political exchanges. Furthermore, he argues, the monetary accounting is incomplete and methodologically problematic. To experts like Corrêa, because South-South technical exchanges are mostly done by civil servants (rather than consultants), any financial appraisal of the 'development effort' of Southern providers should account for the opportunity cost of not doing work domestically, the embedded investments in the technology being transferred free from cost, and the proportional cost of wages and daily fees in soft currencies.

While confronting these technical-political challenges, governments and experts in Latin America have advocated for complementary measures capable of attributing value to SSC, termed 'non-monetary quantification' or 'value-adding/valuation'[186] (ABC 2015; SEGIB 2016; Corrêa 2017; Escallón 2019). The 'valuation' methodology is used by SEGIB, since 2007, to document SSC flows in Latin America through the lenses of 'SSC projects' rather than 'SSC budgets',[187] while also assessing for their 'cost of intervention' and 'economic value'.[188] Brazilian *Cobradi* reports also critically engaged with this issue and decided not to adopt the metrics of 'development effort/GNI ratio' (developed by the DAC), which would make Brazilian SSC 'invisible' in the national budget. *Cobradi* reports focus instead on mapping Brazilian 'governmental spending' with international cooperation[189] and feature additional qualitative descriptions of Brazilian cooperation practices to explain what cooperating agencies *do* rather than merely accounting for financial flows using OECD-DAC modalities considered 'foreign to the Brazilian reality' (J. B. B. Lima and Pereira Jr. 2019, 19).[190] According to *Cobradi* researchers, this was a compromise solution: Brazil kept its official SSC metrics within the overall established boundaries of international cooperation development regime, while looking for 'practical solutions' that fitted Brazil's own budgetary reality (ibid).

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[185] The word 'structural' here is of particular importance. First, it has been a major feature of Latin American SSC capacity building efforts, what Brazilian health practitioners branded 'structuring cooperation', which later became an important feature of Brazilian technical cooperation under the PT government (Leite et al. 2014). *Structural* here also connects to a longer history of development thinking in the region, particularly the Dependency Theory developed in the region and notably promoted by ECLAC in the 1970s. This current critique thus echoes an older divide in developmental thinking between ECLAC structuralists and the mainstream liberal developmental thinking, embodied by the OECD, even if the OECD-affiliated heterodox Development Centre has been a strong partner of ECLAC and has been increasingly active in promoting alternative debates on SSC and triangular cooperation (ECLAC/OECD 2018).

[186] *Valoración,* in Spanish.

[187] In 2015, SEGIB and the Ibero-American PIFCSS replaced the primary tool, the questionnaire, used to collect the data for drafting the reports with an online data platform: the Ibero-American Integrated Data System on South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

[188] SEGIB understands the former as 'direct expenses incurred to execute the cooperation (such as air tickets, travel allowance, and materials)' and the latter as 'the equivalent to the value assigned to the technical and professional resources mobilised to execute the cooperation, adding to the "technical hour" value' (PIFCSS 2016a cited in Escallón 2019). Valuation is also employed by countries like Chile, since 2013, and Colombia, since 2017.

[189] *Levantamento de gastos*, in Portuguese. Such methodology was considered 'unorthodox' also within IPEA, a well-known 'palace of economists' (INT-BR-36).

[190] INT-BR-36.

Rather than a Latin American-specific issue, these critiques are at the heart of the politics of devising new metrics, like the TOSSD, and of current debates on financing for development.[191] Similar critiques and experimentations have also reverberated among other Southern providers. Turkey, for instance, which reports its development cooperation flows to the DAC, has recast its 'development effort' to fully capture its humanitarian disbursements in the Syrian crisis. This adaptation, or even 'subversion from within', puts Turkey among the largest ODA contributors in terms of share of national income in the recent years (Haug 2020; I. Mitchell, Ritchie and Rogerson 2020).[192] Scholars have also suggested that Indian development efforts would be better appreciated if adjusted to the purchasing power parity (PPP) standard[193] and reported China's unease with the lack of recognition for nonmonetary and in-kind aid (Sears 2019). Lastly, the UNDP and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) recently partnered with SEGIB to map South-South and triangular cooperation projects in Africa (UNDP/NEPAD 2019). Experts involved in this first exercise explained that mapping technical cooperation (rather than blended modalities or development finance) was a pragmatic choice: 'the simplest to do' and a way to avoid 'opening the pandora box'.[194] No similar mapping has taken place in Asia, where scholars like Chaturvedi (2018) have argued that 'Asian ways of doing SSC' (which includes greater emphasis on economic than on technical cooperation) make measuring and reporting of South-South exchanges less possible or desirable.

Critiques of financial quantification are, nonetheless, far from consensual, even in Latin America. Some countries, like Mexico, and individual experts, including in Brazil,[195] have showed more willingness to monetise SSC contributions: either harmonising with DAC's ODA counting methodology; embracing new universal metrics, like the TOSSD; or creating alternative metrics based on a political agreement reached among Southern governments. Mexico, a country that puts statistics at the heart of its SSC system,[196] has

[191] Attention to the financing dimension of development cooperation is certainly not new but it has gained different contours in the past years in the context of the so-called 'financialization' of international development. The financialization agenda is a broad, complex, and contested one. It refers to what many experts and practitioners see as an ongoing shift from classic 'foreign aid' towards 'development finance'. Financialization of development cooperation, as a phenomenon, includes, for instance, a push for greater participation of the private sector and market instruments in development cooperation and the use of ODA to catalyse private sector investments in ODA-recipient countries. Underlying these dynamics there is the assumption of the need to deepen and expand financial markets in the name of development. (Mawdsley 2018c; Järvelä and Solitander 2020).

[192] As explained in Chapter 3, DAC metrics have a very specific, and still contested internally, standard for reporting in-country refugee support as ODA, namely that the reported amount refers to the first 12 months only. Turkey reporting subverts this logic because it accounts for all its humanitarian and refugee-related support.

[193] This observation was made by Rani Mullen, expert on Indian development cooperation, in a public event at the Brookings India (New Delhi, 2018).

[194] The 11 countries that volunteered to report on South-South technical development cooperation activities for the year of 2017 were Benin, Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Rwanda, Sudan and Uganda. A total of 300 technical SSC and triangular initiatives were mapped. According to first-hand accounts by experts involved in this first exercise, the idea was to develop methodologies that would resonate to those countries that volunteered. UNDP and partners developed an Excel based SSC reporting template and had all countries agreeing on the template.

[195] See Chapter 5 for more on domestic measurement politics and institutional 'duelling' in Brazil.

[196] This is unique among SSC providers but not surprising considering Mexico's proximity to the OECD, of which it is a member (Haug 2020). Mexico's Cooperation Law, for instance, makes no direct mention to SSC principles as enshrined in BAPA or Nairobi but has integrated OECD five effectiveness principles (Zea 2016).

already tried to account for the monetary value of experts' work through cost-opportunity and cost of mobility methodologies (AMEXCID 2018).[197] Likewise, ECLAC has a statistics-heavy Working Group on quantification of SSC since 2013. No consensus has been reached on a final methodology there, but since 2016 the organisation works with its members on ways to adapt its 'satellite/national accounts' methodology to counting SSC (ECLAC 2016; 2018).[198] ECLAC attempts echo other adaptations, including the Mexican one, to apply the PPP factor or adjust Southern experts' work values to standard international salary tables,[199] as to have a better sense of the 'development effort' made by those in the South who contribute financially with less dollars because their cooperation efforts and experts are cheaper.[200]

Altogether, the debates and experimentations mentioned above assist SSC providers in distinguishing their contribution from other development cooperation flows, giving visibility and differentiating SSC's 'unique' (financial) contribution to the SDGs. Rather than purely technical discussions these counterpoints re-politicise measurement and create openings to question the politics of 'aid generosity', asking what counts as generosity and challenging the kinds of generosity being counted.[201] Disputes and experimentations further illustrate one facet of SSC measurement paradox. They reveal, on the one hand, agency from Southern providers to negotiate ways of counting SSC that are seen as fairer and/or more beneficial to them, fighting a perceived 'epistemic violence'[202] and substantiating claims related to SSC cost-effectiveness.[203] On the other, they reveal the tensions policy and knowledge entrepreneurs face when navigating the need to find suitable ways to become members of the community of development cooperation providers and the anxieties of being caught in unfavourable logics and metrics.

The second set of battles relates to *counting South-South development finance*. Here traditional DAC metrics have been criticised for either overestimating or underestimating SSC contributions, through applying ODA's 'concessional/grant element' golden rule to existing 'hybrid' SSC instruments. This is the case of Indian trade promotion and development assistance-related Exim Bank-LOCs scheme that applies different degrees of softness while requiring the import of goods and services from India up to a minimum of 75%

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[197] These quantification pilots were considered insufficient by Mexican bureaucrats and civil society (INT-OSS-3; INT-OSS-6; INT-OSS-4; INT-OSS-5).

[198] ECLAC is a historically strong knowledge producer around development and also relies on a robust statistics component. ECLAC, together with SEGIB in Latin America, has been one of the first international bodies studying how to measure SSC and developing tools to report on SSC (Silva et al. 2016). SEGIB started its reporting in 2007 and ECLAC started theirs in 2012. Whereas SEGIB has worked with development cooperation agencies in the region, ECLAC has mostly worked with the national statistical agencies. SEGIB and ECLAC measurement methodologies have significantly diverged.

[199] Including the ones utilised by the United Nations or the World Bank.

[200] The need to adjust prices and wages is also recognised by proponents of post-aid metrics (e.g. Mitchell, Ritchie and Rogerson 2020).

[201] INT-BR-6.

[202] This term, and its correlated notions (such as 'epistemic oppression' or 'epistemic injustice') advanced by feminist and decolonial thinkers, including Gayatari Spivak, Walter Mignolo, Paulo Freire, Partha Chaterjee and many others, have been progressively explored within critical SSC. For a conceptual discussion on Southern epistemologies in SSC, see Caixeta (2015). For an application in the case of Brazil-Angola relations, see Santos, Siman, and Fernández (2019).

[203] INT-BR-6; INT-BR-43.

of the contracted amount (GoI 2015).[204] This is also the case for Chinese concessional loans that operate with variable concessional rates. For China's Exim Bank loans, no less than 50% of materials and equipment are required to be purchased from China (Zhang 2020).

Brazil, China and India have uncomfortably navigated this counting due to how it translated into international rankings and to how it interacted with other domestic bureaucratic and citizenship politics. Brazil's official *Cobradi* reports feature financial contributions to multilateral development banks like the World Bank or the BRICS-led NDB under the category of 'contributions to multilateral organisations', while the BNDES Exim Bank operations—through which the Brazilian Development Bank acts as an export credit agency and provides loans under variable rates—have been excluded from the calculations (Cabral 2011; Leite et al. 2014). *Cobradi* researchers reported having attempted to include accounts of BNDES international infrastructure building operations but, due to the inter-institutional technical-political controversies over whether BNDES operations should be considered 'South-South development finance' and whether the loans were made under 'ODA-like' concessional terms, data on BNDES was excluded.[205]

The controversies and thus the ongoing invisibility of BNDES flows in Brazilian official SSC statistics is explained not only because BNDES never framed its Exim operations as 'development finance' or 'development cooperation'[206] but also because, so far, Brasília preferred a narrow and less 'business-friendly' definition of SSC, thus excluding export credit operations from its core development cooperation modalities.[207] The debate in India and China was exactly the opposite. Several experts opposed separating commercial from concessional loans arguing this was inconsistent with the very logic of SSC, which for them includes economic and financial cooperation regardless of a grant component (Tan-Mullins, Mohan and Power 2010; Chaturvedi 2016). This stance is not unrelated to the claim that measuring the 'grant element' is necessary for ODA in order to hold DAC donors accountable for their 0.7% ODA/GNI target, a responsibility that is absent from SSC partnerships (Besharati 2017; Bracho 2017; also Chapter 8).

Overall, there has been no agreement between Southern practitioners and scholars, including within NeST, on whether SSC financial quantification should be restricted to what can be verified as 'concessional' flows. While some agree this is the only way to produce comparability among SSC providers and between SSC and ODA flows, others prefer more flexible, self-defined, approaches where countries would choose what they would report as flows, with no intention to produce comparisons. Such a flexible approach, they say,

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[204] This percentage was higher in the past, but was formally fixed in 75% after the 2015 reforms. In practice, however, countries, like Bangladesh, have managed to negotiate and secure more favourable deals in some cases (Bhattacharya, Rahman, and Muhtasim 2019).
[205] INT-BR-35; INT-BR-36.
[206] See BNDES Questions & Answers on 'export support' (BNDES 2018). For a critical discussion on BNDES framing, see (Conectas 2018).
[207] The traditional 'allergy' to private sector that has been changing in the last few years due to budgetary restrictions, and, particularly since 2016, when a new coalition came into power more inclined to work along the private sector (Suyama, Waisbich and Leite 2016; D. Marcondes and Mawdsley 2017).

is coherent with the very 'spirit of SSC' (Turianskyi 2017; Chaturvedi et al. 2019). Behind the country-led flexible approach, I contend, also lies the unresolved political consensus around a commonly accepted definition for SSC.

Technical-political issues explain why statistical information on SSC remains fragmented: limited to the circumscribed *ad hoc* tools developed by the OECD, academics or by multilaterals, like SEGIB. Early attempts to produce cross-regional accounts of SSC flows were made by UNDESA in its 2010 development cooperation report, but these efforts stalled. Another attempt came from the Brazilian government, in 2015, when ABC presented to the Core Group of Southern Partners at the UN an initial proposition on a 'Reference Platform' for the collection of monetary and non-monetary information on development-related exchange flows between developing countries.[208] In ABC's proposition, each country would decide what to report according to their own practices. The Platform was the first concrete proposal for a common framework, but had little political buy-in from other key Southern partners and Brazil itself did not use its diplomatic capital to push it further in the following years.[209] Though UNCTAD and UNOSSC have maintained discussions on the topic, no other UN body has been officially mandated to develop tools and metrics to count SSC, not even after BAPA+40.

With or without an intergovernmental consensus, Southern providers still have to manage others (in *Aidland* and in civil society) counting SSC flows and the numerous domestic implications of these external estimations. These include intra-and inter-bureaucratic conflicts but also dealing with the domestic costs of inconsistencies between stated priorities and budget allocation.[210] The increased visibility of development finance flows and of financial quantification of SSC more broadly also fuelled public perceptions that 'too much is being spent abroad', instigating domestic debates about official lack of transparency and/or raising expectations from other Southern partners to receive more.[211] I will return to these tensions in the coming chapters.

The politics of assessing impact and growing experimentations with SSC evaluation

Measuring the quality of SSC and its results is another arena where Southern providers have challenged existing practices and started to experiment and innovate. There are numerous contextual drivers for the

[208] For an official account of ABC Platform proposition, see ABC (2015) and Côrrea (2017). Also see Silva et al. (2016), for a critical and comparative discussion of the Platform alongside other existing propositions.
[209] Mostly due to extreme political volatility in the country, which marginalised ABC within the federal *government* and made development experts more cautious to lead on any ambitious initiative. A similar profile was adopted in BAPA+40, discussed above, despite Brazilian leadership in SSC throughout the previous decade. Likewise, the Platform was never operationalised inside Brazil. Its set-up has been hindered, technically, by the fact that it requires disaggregated data from different sources that are not readily available, but also politically by the persistent disagreements among Brazilian bureaucracies on the subject of SSC quantification and reporting, as shown in Chapter 5.
[210] INT-IN-16; INT-BR-35.
[211] INT-CH-4.

growing attention to this issue and great variance among countries and within countries (across sectors and modalities). Yet, as SSC entered its consolidation phase, evaluations and impact assessments became increasingly important, if not a necessity, for certain actors in *SSC-land*. This growing need to understand and show results has prompted a series of policy and operational reforms as well as a greater global activism by knowledge actors to craft Southern/SSC-specific ways to evaluate development cooperation efforts.

As stated in Chapter 3, evaluations are tools to create visible proofs to justify the 'aid enterprise' and tools perceived by practitioners as simultaneously burdensome and useful to improve management and learning (Rottenburg 2009; Jensen and Winthereik 2013; Eyben and Guijt 2015). Evaluations are now appearing in *SSC-land* driven by and embedded in a combination of status-seeking, strategic and management concerns. Evaluations, reviews and assessments are increasingly valued for assisting in policy learning (NeST 2019)[212] but also for reputation stakes: serving both as 'wake-up calls' to prevent things to go wrong in the future (Jiang 2019) and as tools to communicate and internationally market SSC innovations and successful experiences (Constantine and Shankland 2017).[213]

Experimentation is mostly taking place at the conceptual level, where a range of Southern actors have engaged in lexical-semantic and methodological battles over SSC evaluation. Knowledge actors have been at the forefront in forging new tools and—in some countries more than others—applying them in internal or independent assessments of SSC initiatives. An early example is NeST proposal for a common conceptual and evaluation framework for SSC. The NeST 'Framework for South-South Cooperation', first agreed in 2015 as a draft proposal, operationalises SSC principles into workable evaluation criteria and methodologies (NeST 2015; 2017). The Framework was since applied to particular case studies by NeST scholars from Brazil, Mexico and South Africa,[214] and used as inspiration for further conceptualisations in the course of SSC evaluations, notably in Brazil and China.[215]

The proposition was, nonetheless, never formally embraced by Southern governments. It also failed to receive full support from all NeST members.[216] For a short-period, the framework kept being debated and updated internally, strongly led by South African experts in the network (NeST 2017). Yet, from 2017 onwards, with stronger leadership from the India-based RIS, NeST stopped advocating for the adoption of that framework, advocating instead against any common framework and in favour of each country

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[212] INT-IN-8; INT-CH-4; INT-CH-14; INT-BR-41; INT-BR-2; INT-BR-64; INT-BR-52; INT-BR-16.

[213] INT-BR-6; INT-CH-3.

[214] For studies that applied the NeST evaluation framework, see Besharati and Rawhani (2016); Vazquez and Lucey (2016); Garelli (2018).The framework was also applied by the German development think-tank DiE to assess the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (Ali 2018).

[215] For conceptual discussions on evaluating Brazilian SSC, see BPC/ASUL (2017); Waisbich, Silva and Suyama (2017); Costa (2018). For examples of external evaluations of Brazilian SSTC that sought to operationalised SSC principles into evaluation criteria and methodologies, see ASUL/PLAN (2015); ASUL/Move (2017); ASUL (2020). For an adaptation done in China, see (CISSCA 2018). For a more recent crosscutting discussion by NeST scholars, see NeST (2019).

[216] INT-OSS-2; INT-BR-5; INT-BR-40.

adopting its own operationalisation of SSC principles into evaluation practices (NeST 2019, 8; also M. Chakrabarti 2019).[217]

RIS knowledge entrepreneur role is also seen in its calls for replacing the term 'evaluation' by the term 'assessment'. RIS scholar Milindo Chakrabarti (2018) insisted, for instance, that, unlike aid, SSC is not a contractual relation and thus should not be judged against external benchmarks and through OECD evaluation criteria.[218] In his view, SSC partners should jointly conduct assessments as a reflective diagnosis and learning exercise.[219] RIS director-general, Sachin Chaturvedi (2018), further explains the preference for the term 'assessment' as resulting from the need to explore the 'nuances' of SSC and he adds: 'It is not mere semantics that we call it impact assessment and not monitoring and evaluation on which there is huge emphasis from our Northern partners'. RIS proposition, however, had so far little traction, even among other development experts in India, some of which characterise this move as a 'language game' or a 'RIS thing'.[220]

While unsuccessful in shifting the SSC-lingo on evaluation,[221] RIS's proposition remains clear demonstrations of ongoing epistemic battles over evaluation and of Indian epistemic activism in this front,[222] in a sign of Indian identity projection efforts (Leveringhaus and Sullivan de Estrada 2018). As put by one interviewee: 'India is trying to find home-grown solutions to measuring, Southern solutions to accountability mechanisms. They are not willing to be rule-takers'.[223] RIS's role has expanded in recent years and reached an almost ironic point where after having rejected common frameworks proposed by others RIS is now leading on a new round of efforts, enabled by a UNOSSC research grant, to work on a 'synthesis framework' (UNOSSC 2020). In the project: 'Experiences from partner countries will be used to create a synthesis of the "assessment" tools which would be comprehensive but not a "standardized" model for assessing SSC' (ibid).[224] Altogether, these moves show RIS (and India more broadly) intent to be the voice to present the solution, in its terms, in a gesture of both pragmatism but also leadership-seeking.

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[217] This shift is clear in a recent UNOSSC-commissioned NeST paper, edited by RIS scholars. The paper provides examples of Southern-led evaluation frameworks and in their introduction the editors state that their objective is to 'argue against a common assessment framework, even though there may be some common elements' among the assessment practices they have gathered.
[218] The five OECD evaluation criteria for project and programme evaluation are: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability (OECD 2009). Several UN agencies also follow similar lines, as discussed in Chapter 5.
[219] According to Chaturvedi (2012), India has conducted joint political reviews in the past, which included discussions on development assistance. Both ABC and AMEXCID also conduct joint reviews of their development cooperation initiatives with their partners. For Brazil, an example of this joint construction can be seen in the lengthy process of designing the evaluation of the *Cotton-4* initiative, in which the evaluation framework was co-constructed with all partners (ENAP 2013; ASUL/PLAN 2015). Joint evaluation meetings conducted by ABC with partners are also examples of this kind of effort, see ABC (2018).
[220] INT-IN-18; INT-IN-8; INT-IN-9.
[221] As almost no other country has joined Brazilian battle to use 'trilateral' rather than 'triangular' cooperation.
[222] INT-BR-4; INT-BR-18; INT-BR-43.
[223] INT-IN-18.
[224] A similar ambivalent stance is found on RIS scholars both wary and critical stances towards triangular cooperation (see M. Chakrabarti 2019) and RIS decision to mainstreaming it in its own SSC dialogue event – the Delhi Process - in 2019, just after the BAPA+40.

Experimentation is also happening at the operational level, although evaluations remain an incipient and *ad hoc* practice in all large SSC providers (Esteves 2018; Rizzo 2019a). Besides contributing to the institutionalisation of SSC in-country, evaluations fulfil a role in backing diplomatic activism. They assist in the reiteration of SSC principles and differentiated cooperation approaches—including the Brazilian propositions of 'structuring' and 'trilateral' cooperation, or the Indian 'development compact'—providing intelligible and/or legitimising evidence to back-up Southern development and policy innovations. In this context, I contend, *the will to evaluate* is not exclusively coming from an external imposition but rather a collection of individual and institutional wills to show results of SSC. Evaluations are mostly about proving Southern 'models' and 'wisdoms' were effective, and worth being shared and adopted by others. As such, SSC evaluations serve as a tool to enhance credibility and legitimacy and boost policy,[225] institutional and personal agendas along the domestic-international continuum.

The review '*China-Tanzania cooperation in agriculture*' (see CISSCA 2018) offers an illustration of evaluations bridging international and domestic policy-institutional dynamics. This study has circulated widely internationally and was given visibility by the UNOSSC, including during BAPA+40 (UNOSSC 2018). Not only scholars from the NeST-affiliated China Agricultural University (CAU) were eager to showcase their study but also the Chinese Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs at the time, Qu Dongyu, who attended the conference in person and was elected, a few months later, the new FAO's Director General.[226] Similarly, the evaluation of Brazil's *'Supporting the Development of the Cotton Sector in the C4 countries'* (hereafter *Cotton-4* project) (see ASUL/PLAN 2015) has also been showcased by Brazilian diplomats including at the Cotton Committee of the World Trade Organisation to consolidate Brazil's reputation as a 'Southern hub' for cotton expertise (Moreira 2020).[227]

Among Southern providers, Brazil has been the country that has most extensively experimented with evaluating SSC, notably its technical cooperation initiatives (bilateral, multi-country and triangular/trilateral[228] with international organisations). The first major publicly available *ex post* independent evaluation, on the *Cotton-4* project, was published in 2015. Since then, the Brazilian government has evaluated several of its trilateral initiatives with bilateral donors (like the Germany and the UK) as well as with UN agencies, including FAO, UNICEF and WFP (see Chapter 5 and Appendix 5 for a non-exhaustive compilation).

[225] On the ways SSC interacts with policy battles, see *inter alia* Cabral et al. (2013); Milhorance and Soule-Kohndou (2017); Stone, Porto de Oliveira and Pal (2019).

[226] For some of my Chinese interlocuters, Dongyu's presence in BAPA+40, contrasting with the absence of other high-level figures working on development issues within China (for instance those involved in BRI issues) indicates both the ways in which the SSC policy field is currently structured in China, but also the importance of BAPA+40 as a networking space for cultivating personal and diplomatic ambitions within global development arenas (INT-CH-16; INT-CH-17).

[227] An argument also raised by my research participants (INT-BR-64; INT-BR-10).

[228] Brazil calls its triangular cooperation 'trilateral' to emphasise the horizontal nature of this relationship between two Southern countries and either an UN agency or a bilateral donor or both, what ABC calls 'Trilateral Development Cooperation+1' (ABC 2019).

The case of Brazil is unique not only for the number of external and publicly available evaluations conducted but also to extent of its engagement in triangular cooperation. Triangular cooperation currently responds for an important slice of Brazilian SSC (Milani 2017; Almino and S. E. M. Lima 2017).[229] Compared to China and India, Brazil has a more consolidated experience of partnering with both bilateral donors and UN agencies in triangular cooperation arrangements on a range of issues, notably agricultural development and social protection (D. Zhang 2017; Paulo 2018; Zoccal 2020b).[230] Initiatives are structured around policy and political dialogue and knowledge and technology sharing. Brazilian triangular cooperation with UN agencies moved from small pilot projects in the early 2000s to more structured initiatives, including through new arrangements (full-fledged programmes, multi-donor trilateral arrangements, Centres of Excellence, etc.).[231] Partnering with Brazil on SSC has been a pilot for many UN agencies and bilateral donors, many of which have developed their SSC corporate strategies based on their learnings from doing SSC with Brazil.[232] For their longevity and consolidation levels, partnerships with Brazil also inaugurated evaluation pilots under this ever-expanding cooperation modality (UNFPA/ABC 2012; ASUL/Move 2017; ASUL 2020).

When the development evaluation apparatus meets South-South cooperation

The importance of triangular cooperation in fostering SSC evaluations in Brazil and beyond is worth unpacking. Considering the role aid evaluations play in *Aidland*, it comes with no surprise that major development actors, such as the UK, Germany and the UNDP, started to fund 'knowledge-related' activities, including policy dialogues, research and M&E components within existing SSC and triangular initiatives. Funding from the UK, for instance, supported knowledge-related activities within Brazilian flagship initiatives such as the Brazil-FAO-WFP Purchase from Africans for Africa (*PAA Africa*) or the Brazil-WFP Centre of Excellence Against Hunger (CEAH). It also included support to knowledge actors and policy dialogues like the BPC-led Dialogues on International Cooperation, mentioned in Chapter 3,

[229] According to Milani (2019), in USD, trilateral cooperation with international organisations went from 2.7 million in 2010 to 16.9 million in 2014. In 2015, more than 70% of the total executed budget for technical cooperation under ABC coordination was channelled trilaterally in partnerships with international organisations. This number represented only 1,9% in 2009. It is important, however, to highlight that the budget under ABC coordination does not accounts for all technical cooperation provided by Brazil, since some public agencies develop their cooperation autonomously.

[230] Brazil entered the business of trilateral partnerships in the 1980s, with the Japanese International Cooperation Agency - JICA, as a follow-up of decades of bilateral technical cooperation in the sectors of agriculture and environment, among others. Yet it was from the mid-2000s onwards that this modality took off, with bilateral agencies (including JICA, the German GIZ, USAID, and the Canadian CIDA), other Southern providers (like the IBSA Fund for Poverty Alleviation co-managed with India and South Africa) and most notably with UN agencies. UNFPA started its work on SSC with Brazil in 2002, ILO's in 2007, while FAO's formal TSSC programme with Brazil started in 2008. UNICEF works with Brazil on SSC since 2004 and a formal TSSC programme was established in 2011. As for WFP, the Brazil-WFP CEAH was set up in 2011. Brazilian cooperation also has a special relationship with and an operational dependence of UNDP since the 1980s (Cabral and Weinstock 2010; Milani 2017; also Chapter 5).

[231] A brief discussion on these different arrangements for operationalising and delivering triangular/trilateral cooperation can be found in Waisbich (2020a).

[232] INT-BR-65; also ASUL (2020).

whose first edition was devoted to measuring SSC.[233] The UK has also adopted a similar strategy in China, seeking to support knowledge actors and development knowledge-related initiatives (DFID 2017a; DFID 2017b; also Chapter 6).

Besides stating the importance of 'traditional development partners' as enablers of SSC evaluations, in the coming paragraphs I start unpacking the making of these evaluations (a topic I will return to in Chapters 5 and 6). By understanding how they came to be, I provide insights into how 'traditional/Northern' ways of practicing accountability and 'Southern' emerging conceptions are being negotiated. Using the Brazilian case, I emphasise the agency of Southern providers in shaping these processes rather than being passively co-opted into existing standards and practices. My main point is that, while each evaluation has its own particularities and drivers, in the most paradigmatic cases of externally-conducted independent evaluations Brazilian actors had a central role. Undoubtedly UN agencies' social conformity pressures and own accountability logics (i.e., the importance given to accounting, reporting and evaluation of projects, and the criteria and methodologies mostly employed) do influence how evaluations are negotiated. Yet the agency in the Brazilian side and the ways in which ABC, the different national agencies, and independent experts tried to experiment and innovate when conducting evaluations should not be underestimated.

The first assessment of the Brazil-WFP CEAH provides an illustration of these mutually constitutive dynamics. Created in 2011 as the first WFP Centre of Excellence,[234] this Brasília-based organisation advocates and disseminates Brazilian policy solutions to fight hunger through home-grown school feeding, among other social policies.[235] In 2016, CEAH decided to conduct a review of its first five years of operation, which they called an 'impact evaluation',[236] not without internal epistemic controversies, as I will discuss shortly. The evaluation was conceived as a learning and a communication tool to show Brazilian alternative models of doing school feeding and doing cooperation (through high-level policy dialogues and horizontal technical exchanges).[237]

[233] INT-BR-10; INT-ODP-5; INT-ODP-7; INT-ODP-8.

[234] Since then, WFP has opened a Centre in China (in 2016) and Cote D'Ivoire (in 2018), the latter framed as a regional centre that 'seeks to replicate the successful South-South cooperation experience of the WFP Centre of Excellence based in Brazil that has assisted governments in Africa, Asia, and Latin America in the fight against hunger, while promoting sustainable school feeding models and other food and nutrition safety nets'. See https://www.wfp.org/news/wfp-and-cote-divoire-create-centre-excellence-against-hunger (last access: 21/10/2020).

[235] 'Home-grown school feeding' consists of a set of inter-related social and agricultural development policies that create a supply chain connecting small-farming producers to schools at the local level. This integrated set of policies include public/institutional purchase schemes and public support to local small-holder farmers as well as food and nutritional security guidelines. See https://www.wfp.org/home-grown-school-meals (last access: 21/10/2020). This multidimensional hunger alleviation policy was the first Brazilian 'best practice' disseminated by the Centre, which has since become a hub for other policy solutions in the field of food security and nutrition (G. Marcondes and De Bruyn 2015).

[236] INT-BR-6; INT-BR-59; INT-BR-72.

[237] INT-BR-6; INT-BR-16; INT-BR-19; INT-BR-52.

The will to show came strongly from CEAH management, which was eager to forge new partnerships and find alternative sources of funding beyond the Brazilian government[238] in a context of political-economic uncertainty.[239] According to an interviewee, this evaluation resulted from the combined interest within the Centre on 'knowledge management' and the evaluation pressures it received from: (i) the WFP/UN system, (ii) from diffuse peer-pressure, and (iii) the pressure it self-imposed to demonstrate 'first, that they were different and, second, that they were having an impact'.[240] A similar set of drivers—combining prestige and legitimacy-seeking with development knowledges and policies' battles—is also found in the case of the short-lived *PAA Africa*, a Brazil-FAO-WFP partnership running between 2012-2016.[241] There, an *ad hoc* insertion of a DFID-funded 'knowledge component' to implement a M&E system for the programme was conceived to prove that the Brazilian model of family farming worked and boost internal paradigm battles within the national and global food security and agricultural development policy communities (Milhorance 2014; Cabral et al. 2016).[242]

Evaluations offered opportunities to renegotiate with the development apparatus conceptions of accountability as well as methodologies to assess results and impact. The review of China-Tanzania cooperation offers an illustration of the former. In a UNOSSC-supported paper describing the evaluation—first published in English, and thus tailored to international audiences[243]—CAU scholars presented their effort within China's SSC differentiated approach, or 'China's SSC model' (CPC 2020), whereby not only 'issues of accountability and transparency [would be] less pertinent to providers' domestic political and economic sphere' (CISSCA 2018, 3) but also 'approaches to improving development effectiveness and efficiency at present are more focused on the purpose of mutual learning' (ibid).

As for negotiations over methodologies, these are visible both in the Brazilian case but also in the incipient, but growing, evaluation efforts happening in China. Development experts from UN agencies (located in country offices in rising powers or within the still marginal 'SSC hubs' in headquarters) have shown increasing willingness to accept alternative ways to conceive results, impact and social/policy change, acknowledging SSC impacts on 'final beneficiaries' can be long term, intangible and/or unmeasurable (BPC/ASUL 2017; Esteves 2018; Mazaro 2019). The use of Theory of Change-based contribution analysis to assess South-South/triangular cooperation capacity building initiatives, focusing on the processes of cooperation as much as on the results, exemplifies these epistemic changes entering the daily practices of programmers and evaluators. Some of these debates echo calls from counter-hegemonic actors within

[238] Namely from the Ministry of Education-affiliated Fund for Educational Development (FNDE), which since its creation has been the major contributor to the CEAH.
[239] INT-BR-72; INT-BR-37; INT-BR-41.
[240] INT-BR-10.
[241] The original *PAA Africa* included the following countries: Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger and Senegal. From the Brazilian side, *PAA Africa* was led by the then CGFome and the Ministry of Agrarian Development, both extinguished in 2016. For more on *PAA Africa*, see Nehring and Hoffmann (2017).
[242] INT-BR-73; INT-BR-50; INT-BR-26; INT-ODP-7; INT-ODP-8.
[243] INT-CH-3.

Aidland, who had been long advocating for a shift from the golden standard of experimental and quasi-experimental studies[244] and from creating success through the 'generation of sausage numbers' (Eyben and Guijt 2015; also Mosse 2005). Rather, they argue, evaluations should recognise the complexity, uncertainty and the *longue durée* of development processes.

Along similar lines, NeST experts strongly advocate for the use of qualitative methods in SSC evaluation, including case studies, reviews, documentations, systematisations, lessons learned, comparative studies, ethnographies, contribution analysis and others (NeST 2015; BPC/ASUL 2017; CISSCA 2018).[245] Qualitative methods were also favoured by SSC programmers based on their acute awareness of the lack of baseline and monitoring data on SSC projects, the intangible policy-knowledge exchange nature of several technical cooperation initiatives, and the limited budget available for M&E activities. Programmers and experts within large Southern providers are also politically aware of the 'attribution' and 'responsibility' sensitivities in evaluating SSC initiatives where the other partner is the one in charge of policies and service delivery and should be the one collecting data on impacts.[246] The quotes from Brazilian and Chinese evaluators, below, illustrate these points:

> *The evaluation tools we could use are 'significant case studies'. The success and failure ones. We have applied these to China's own programmes and could apply them to cooperation as well. We need something easy.*[247]

> *Not even with a budget of a million Brazilian reais we could have gathered the quantitative basis to allow for any quasi-experimental or randomised study.*[248]

Yet advocating for qualitative methods has not been free from tensions. In Brazil, this is materialised in numerous debates within ABC and other national implementation institutions over whether to rely on qualitative methods or on more 'powerful' quantitative methods that would pass as *clear* evidence of success rather than *possible* contributions to outcomes in partners countries.[249] As put by one senior ABC expert:

> *We want to go beyond narrating what we did. We had X number of projects and Y was spent. So what? What have we actually done? We have 30 years. We are in a position to be a grown-up and demonstrate. We want to have a clear set of evidence. This is crucial to our agency.*[250]

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[244] As discussed in Chapter 3, there is a long list of academic and policy studies pointing in this direction and emphasising the need for the sector to embrace complexity and uncertainty. For recent iterations, see Honing (2020); Davey (2020); Kvangraven (2020).
[245] INT-CH-5; INT-CH-3
[246] INT-BR-37; INT-OSS-3.
[247] INT-CH-5.
[248] INT-BR-72.
[249] INT-BR-14; INT-BR-6; INT-BR-37.
[250] INT-BR-14.

The aforementioned CEAH evaluation offers an additional illustration. While 'testing waters' of how to evaluate the first five years of its operations, both the Centre's staff and their ABC counterparts felt the need to present 'telling numbers' to demonstrate isolated, direct, impact of CEAH actions. Both institutions had to balance high hopes of commissioning an evaluation that could come up with clear evidence on the impact of the Brazil-led CEAH and the recognition that this was technically difficult. Obstacles included the fact that CEAH actions were dispersed across more than 30 countries and primarily advocacy-related.[251] It also included the fact that 'telling numbers' would hardly come out of a first general evaluation conducted without baselines or robust monitoring systems and with little resources for field missions to collect data on the ground.[252] The Centre made clear its concerns to evaluators when affirming not being interested in '*Tupiniquim* evaluations'.[253] *Tupiniquim* is the name of an ancient indigenous people in Brazil and used colloquially as a derogatory term to express 'made in Brazil'. The fear to be assessed through what the Centre perceived as less-valued/valuable forms of knowing is revealing of the anxieties within Southern providers and a reflection of the continuous epistemic violence in the field. In this case, this violence is carried on by one of the new players in town, against itself, in a sign of internalised stigma.

Porter's (1995) discussion on the 'power of numbers' and Espeland and Sauder's (2007) insights on social measures are useful lenses to unpack these anxieties. Both highlight the historical move towards making things commensurable, based on quantification and numbers' power to create objectivity and credibility, something undoubtedly valid to development cooperation (Fukuda-Parr and McNeill 2019). Yet Espeland and Sauder also posit that social measures generate critical 'reflexivity' on those using them.[254] Reflexivity was visible in the CEAH evaluation when practitioners both regretted not having 'powerful numbers' to show but also critically reflected on what numerical evidence (of newly approved school feeding laws, newly adopted school feeding programmes, and of the numbers of pupils receiving school meals) represented to their own development cooperation and evaluation practices.

Their reflections are indicators of the many tensions embedded in assessing South-South technical cooperation/capacity development interventions: first, the existence of intangible and unmeasurable results in development partnerships promoting advocacy and high-level policy dialogue activities to build 'domestic coalitions of change' rather than acting at the operational level with hands-on exchanges or service delivery.[255] Second, the uncertainty about who is accountable for the results and who is interested or in charge of evaluations (the large Southern provider? the other Southern partner? UN agencies?) particularly in the cases where implementation is co-shared or *de facto* led by UN agencies.[256] Third, the difficulties in

[251] INT-BR-6; INT-BR-14.
[252] INT-BR-59; INT-BR-72.
[253] INT-BR-72.
[254] INT-BR-6; INT-BR-14; INT-BR-16; INT-BR-19; INT-BR-52; INT-BR-72; INT-BR-59; INT-BR-41.
[255] INT-BR-37; INT-BR-58.
[256] INT-BR-50; also ASUL (2020).

telling 'stories of change' without particular kinds of data, considering that the first evaluations in the 2010s had to reconstruct processes and outcomes with insufficient project documentation, thus reinforcing some of the transparency and reform debates from within.

Measurement politics and global negotiations over South-South cooperation

Considering the multiple measurement politics examined so far, is possible to identify three streams of negotiations currently shaping global SSC accountability politics. First, at the diplomatic level, between rising powers and the rest of the development community. Here Brazil, China and India's growing openness to discussing SSC measurement has led to particular forms of convergence with existing normative and operational frameworks for measuring ODA while simultaneously generating friction between Northern and Southern providers as well as within the South.

In the North-South axis, no universal normative and epistemic agreement on frameworks and on how to count (and account for) all development cooperation flows has been reached. Social pressure from *Aidland* for Southern providers to measure (quantify and evaluate) SSC include a range of influencing strategies whereby multilateral and bilateral donors negotiate with Southern providers ways to mainstream accountability and measurement issues while accepting that Southern countries, and particularly rising powers, will lead on efforts and come with their own solutions to the 'accountability problem'. In what could be seen as a win-win situation, certain UN bodies and Northern knowledge actors, such as the German Development Institute (DIE) or the Oxfam confederation, commissioned and published papers giving voice to Southern experts and CSOs to present 'Southern-ways' to measure SSC.[257] UN agencies in particular have reinforced the trend towards measuring in joint triangular projects, acting as brokers of intergovernmental exchange processes, and/or offering technical support for Southern partners (Esteves 2018). This has been accompanied and reinforced by bilateral traditional donors (notably the UK, Germany, Japan and Australia)[258] own diplomatic efforts to enhance the 'management' and/or 'knowledge' areas within 'SSC bureaucracies', through funding studies, policy dialogues, institutional strengthening activities, and M&E of SSC initiatives.

Southern providers, in their turn, have consistently emphasised their autonomy in deciding how to measure SSC, showing greater preference for 'country-led'/'non-binding' measures and a lack of urgency in forging cross-regional consensus on the matter. There is, nonetheless, variance in the ways rising powers have projected their preferences. Brazil has shown a critical-conciliatory diplomacy; China a more pragmatic (if

[257] Examples include Esteves (2018); Ali (2018); ASUL/Oxfam (2018); Mitra (2018); Besharati and MacFeely (2019).

[258] While the UK and Japan have worked with Brazil, China and India. Germany has mostly worked at the global level and bilaterally with Brazil and India, while Australia has mostly worked with China.

not disinterested) one; and India has adopted more critical-resistance stances. Diplomatic behaviour also translated into Brazil and China featuring a wider range of domestic experimentations with measuring than India (Esteves 2018; Rizzo 2019a; Milani 2019; also Chapters 5 and 6). Finally, rather than co-optation, North-South negotiations reveal complex processes of mutual socialisation, with both an increased politicisation of measurement debates (in some cases leading to dead-ends at the multilateral level) and at the same time conceptual and methodological experimentation and innovation at the operational level both in rising powers and in multilaterals.

At the same time, agreement has not been reached along the South-South axis due to the plurality of SSC partnerships and the unwillingness of some large providers, quietly China and vocally India, to devise common frameworks for measuring SSC. Indian opposition is marked by a will to assert country's identity in opposition to a 'Northern/Western' paradigm *and* to alleged 'Chinese or Latin American models', in a demonstration of symbolic and material competition. Indian diplomatic and para-diplomatic stances are also increasingly pragmatic, in the ways suggested by Miller and Sullivan de Estrada (2017, 28) of 'pragmatism as bricolage': acting less to transform the world than to carve a more favourable space in it, through 'the selection and fusion of different—and sometimes competing—ideas and ideological commitments in order to improvise new policy positions'.[259]

Lack of advances at the inter-state level on norms and tools result from the fragmentation and competition dynamics unfolding in the field, but also to the current shaky state of global governance. Unwilling or unable to create their own autonomous negotiation table, as demonstrated by the short-lived Core Group of Southern Partners,[260] little progress has happened at formal large multilateral forums like the UNDCF or the BAPA+40 process. After more than a decade of debates, the South still asks for more time and space to lead on discussions and move them forward (Corrêa 2017; Li 2018; Escallón 2019), while remaining strongly divided on the matter. Whereas for some countries more time means a commitment to keep building a consensus, for others this is a useful strategy to achieve an indefinite postponement.

The second set of negotiations is happening within the global development epistemic community. On the one hand, experts within *Aidland* continue to devise new 'universal' accountability tools to account for development flows, embracing a 'equator-less'/'beyond aid' era where flows from 'traditional' and 'new' public and non-public actors are counted together (I. Mitchell, Ritchie and Rogerson 2020; Sumner et al. 2020). On the other hand, Southern experts, including inside NeST, remain attached to their 'Southern-based contributions' to these debates but divided over whether and how to count SSC. Southern experts have helped setting the agenda around SSC measurement while acting along what Walter Mignolo once

[259] An illustration of this contemporary identity-quest can be seen in Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar (2020) new book 'The Indian Way'.
[260] The Group met briefly from 2013 to 2015.

called 'epistemic disobedience' (Caixeta 2015; Rizzo 2019a). Numerous debates were hosted in a range of Southern providers and at the margins of international forums. Yet little agreement was achieved, indicating that both intergovernmental and epistemic consensus are unlikely considering the ongoing macro-geopolitical divides, the various degrees of foreign policy autonomist stances, and the individual and institutional micro-disputes among and within the Southern expert/policy communities.[261]

Finally, a third set of SSC measurement negotiations is taking place within rising powers. These internal divergences between knowledge and policy actors, and within these groups, have had an influence on Brazil, China and India diplomatic behaviour across time. Domestic negotiations not only sustained international activism but also created more (or less) unified diplomatic stances. The active gatekeeping by a few actors in the Indian case and the plurality of voices in the Brazilian case clearly show two opposing dynamics, as I will show in Chapters 5 and 6. Internal negotiations—present in all three countries despite their greater salience in Brazil—reveal fractures over foreign policy and international roles, over development cooperation, and over how to produce knowledge about it. They also reveal policy management and bureaucratic/institutional competition, in which actors (development practitioners, knowledge actors and civil society groups) jump scales and use transnational arenas to disseminate their own views and preferences. Arguably, the types of domestic actors participating in global arenas, or their diversity, remains bounded by context-specific policy styles and state-society relations. Yet, across the three countries, domestic actors have expanded their transnational activism and participated in several tables at the same time, aligned or challenging official governmental stances, as I will discuss in subsequent chapters.

Importantly, domestic disputes also re-politicise global problematisations of SSC measurement, questioning the purpose or usefulness of differentiation-driven diplomatic measurement battles. At the operational level, programmers are increasingly questioning the predominance of measurement debates and how the agenda grew out of diplomats and knowledge actors' will to foster geopolitical and/or knowledge disputes. As put by a Mexican programmer at AMEXCID: 'What is the use of knowing the amounts, if we do not know what we do?'.[262] This somewhat echoes the ponderings of a South African researcher to whom 'the whole preoccupation with measurement is maybe too narrow. Researchers are not asking government what their needs are'.[263] Ultimately, for practitioners looking at global controversies from their own frail 'SSC bureaucracies', the most pressing problems might be less about disputing how to count cooperation efforts than finding ways to make initiatives more meaningful and sustainable.

[261] INT-BR-4; INT-BR-5; INT-OSS-2.
[262] INT-OSS-3; INT-BR-44; INT-OSS-12.
[263] INT-OSS-12.

Conclusion

This chapter examined how measurement became a prevalent SSC accountability issue at the global level. It did so out of a several emerging understandings of accountability in/of SSC (accountability to SSC principles, accountability between Southern partners, domestic democratic accountability, and accountability towards peoples of the South) and of several competing issues (transparency of flows, compliance with 'donorship' norms, and attention to developmental impacts on local populations).

In Chapter 3, I discussed the growing calls for accountability in/of SSC been met with both resistance and differentiated integration strategies by rising powers. This chapter unpacked how, from 2013 onwards, Brazil, China and India showed signs of discursive accommodation, of normative, policy and epistemic entrepreneurship, as well as attempts to conduct internal 'pro-accountability' measurement-related reforms. Rather than full compliance with existing standards, this shift has generated a multitude of controversies. 'Measurement battles', as I have called them, result from Southern governments and knowledge actors disputing meanings, concepts and ways to operationalise SSC measurement tools, based on differentiation claims vis-à-vis ODA and vis-à-vis each other: Brazil as 'non-Asian', India and Brazil as 'non-China', China as a large donor 'still learning' how to be a donor.

Against this backdrop, I claimed that negotiations over accountability and measurement observed around BAPA+40 are the product of three inter-related dynamics: first, external social pressure and demands on rising powers to measure their cooperation as ways to justify internationally what they do. Second, the responses by Southern providers and the epistemic battles and innovations they put forward. Third, the two-way socialisation happening across *Aidland* and *SSC-land* around how to practice measurement and accountability.

The exact balance between resistance, compliance, experimentation and innovation varied across rising powers. While Brazil (and others in Latin America) advanced the public spending-transparency nexus in their SSC, India kept both the strong resistance non-interference and defensive differentiation claims to dismiss the appropriateness or utility of engaging in SSC accountability debates in formal global arenas. However, India used (and crafted) other 'tables' to show Southern ways to think and do accountability, emphasising the plurality of SSC and an opposition to stronger and binding common frameworks. China kept a more pragmatic and selective approach. While less interested in forging epistemic battles globally Beijing joined others in opposing stronger normative advances on SSC and engaged in cautious experimentations to internationally justify some of its SSC-related engagements.

These negotiations are also revealing of the 'measurement paradox' faced by large SSC providers. The paradox consists of navigating prevailing forms of development 'measurementality' and specific foreign

policy dilemmas that create opportunities to showcase rising powers' contributions to global development and boost international status quests while fostering numerous geopolitical, epistemic and domestic tensions. Rather than purely methodological debates, Southern responses and alternative propositions are unquestionably political. Conceptual and operational innovation by Southern providers in practicing measurement reveal different degrees of discomfort with current ODA metrics and with being measured by others but also Southern actors' willingness to reinvent methodologies and produce new standards that might rank them higher. At the same time, through their activism, rising powers unavoidably fall in patterns of rendering the accountability discussion technical. By doing so, SSC providers (starting with the larger ones) risk being caught in the same shortcomings of managerial accountability and the 'results agenda' of North-South cooperation, that is, of reducing knowing to quantification, of overly focusing on technocratic/managerial understandings of accountability as counting, and ultimately working to showcase performance and generosity rather than for transformational change.

Finally, the chapter highlighted the importance of internal factors in shaping transnational disputes. As SSC became more materially and politically important not only were the win-win and solidarity discourses questioned in the name of clearer mutual benefits on the ground, but also the separation between governments demands/priorities and domestic constituencies' demands/priorities became difficult to be sustained, creating multiple tensions, contradictions, disjunctions and new calls for accountability that were also brought to the transnational arena. These calls have remained relatively marginalised at the global level by the omnipresence of geopolitical and epistemic measurement politics. For much of the early days, SSC was too small in domestic budgets and politics to be noticed, but already too big in global development flows and geopolitics to be ignored. This has changed from 2010 onwards creating not only new global dynamics but also a set of domestic accountability politics to be examined in the next chapters.

5. Negotiating South-South cooperation accountability at home: Brazil

Late in 2010, Brazil published the first edition of its *Cobradi* report: a comprehensive survey of country's contribution to international development. In his foreword, then President Lula da Silva said:

> *The Brazilian government believes that cooperation for development is not limited to the interaction between donors and recipients: we understand it as an exchange between equals, with mutual benefits and responsibilities. It is a model still under construction, which despite revealing a few of its features, still lacks greater systematization and debate. Accordingly, this survey represents the first step towards building a policy of international cooperation for development, integrated into Brazilian foreign policy goals, which is not subject to the priorities of each government, but may also count on the strong support of the State and civil society.* (IPEA/ABC 2011).[264]

Lula's words convey the then reformist intents of Brazilian development cooperation, a field that was—and remains so—in-the-making. As a measurement tool, *Cobradi* was conceived to show the world that its 'alternative model' was possible, to assist the federal government in showcasing country's role as a 'development partner', and to help consolidating development cooperation as a state policy in Brazil. It was also about 'practicing transparency' in a Southern way.

Southern ways of conceiving and practicing accountability and the domestic disputes around it are the focus of this chapter on Brazil and the following chapter on China and India. The two chapters examine unfolding *problematisation*s and *negotiations* of accountability in SSC in Brazil, China and India, exploring (i) how has SSC accountability been problematised domestically; (ii) the actors driving and engaging with these problematisations and the kinds of accountability issues they have raised; and (iii) the kinds of negotiations and reforms unfolding.

In this chapter, I show three types of accountability politics currently playing out in Brazil. The first is political and relates to 'meta' foreign policy debates over the appropriateness of the South-South axis and state-developmentalism to Brazilian international identity and ambitions. The second one is managerial and revolves around bureaucratic disputes over development cooperation budgets, management and measurement. The third one is social and relates to state-society disputes over transparency, the right to participate in development cooperation policymaking, and over development models being 'exported' through SSC initiatives (further discussed in Chapter 7).

[264] Original translation. The first edition of Cobradi was published in Portuguese, in 2010, and in English, in 2011.

In other to make sense of the Brazilian landscape, I draw on Rennes (2016) distinction between *expert political controversies* and *public political controversies*. In particular, I argue that *public* debates (and even controversies) over accountability in/of Brazilian SSC have revolved mostly around country's broader and strategic foreign policy options and around few politically visible dimensions (or modalities) of the 'Brazilian SSC compact', namely the BNDES export credit operations and public-private investments in Africa. These debates have developed in tandem with growing politicisation of Brazilian foreign policy in the past decade. The remaining dimensions, including technical cooperation—Brazil's flagship SSC modality—remained largely invisible in the public arena except for a few debates on Brazil-Africa agricultural exchanges. Public invisibility, I posit, is explained by the relative lack of materiality of technical cooperation exchanges in public budgets and in public imaginaries. Lack of materiality also shaped the low salience of SSC issues to Brazilian audit and control systems, excepting again for the case of BNDES.

Lastly, while looking at *epistemic* (or expert) debates and negotiations I argue that emerging experimentation in quantifying and evaluating SSC responds to the activism by internal champions within the Brazilian 'SSC ecosystem'[265] in government and civil society, in dialogue with international partners. Materiality and visibility dilemmas explain both the search for alternative ways to count and showcase Brazilian SSC but also the tensions generated between and within 'SSC bureaucracies' in Brazil in times of political crisis and austerity.

In the rest of the chapter, I first set the broader sociopolitical context in which SSC accountability politics have emerged. Next, I discuss measurement and audit politics. In each section, I have utilised paradigmatic examples of SSC modalities and/or initiatives where different domestic SSC accountability politics (bureaucratic, epistemic and state-society relations) interact.

Problematising South-South relations: 'noisy' politicisation and growing audit cultures

Days after the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, in May 2016, cutting short a cycle of four electoral victories from the Workers' Party (PT), José Serra, the new Chancellor and well-known opposition figure,[266]

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[265] Here again, I borrow the term 'SSC ecosystem' from the work done by the Islamic Development Bank on the 'national ecosystems for South-South and Triangular Cooperation' (IsDB 2019).

[266] President Dilma Rousseff (affiliated with the PT) was outset in a controversial and highly divisive impeachment process. Her vice-President, Michel Temer (affiliated with the right-wing party Brazilian Democratic Movement - MDB) took power in May 2016. Serra is affiliated with the centre-right Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB). He was Temer's first Minister of Foreign Affairs between 2016 and 2017. Between 1998-2002, Serra was also Minister of Health under Fernando Henrique Cardoso's (1995-2002) presidency.

promised to reform Brazilian foreign policy as to adopt a more pragmatic South-South strategy based on concrete results. In his inaugural address, Serra stated that:

> *Contrary to what was disseminated among us, modern Africa does not ask for compassion, but expects effective economic, technological, and investment exchanges. (…) This is the correct South-South strategy, not the one that came to be practiced for advertising purposes, scarce economic benefits and large diplomatic investments.* (MRE 2016).[267]

His address contains important elements of the broader political context in which SSC has evolved in Brazil throughout the 2010s. Looking at this context, I contend that Brazilian domestic SSC accountability politics have been largely shaped by three interlocking factors. First, the intense and 'noisy'[268] politicisation of Brazilian foreign policy during the PT era—under Lula da Silva (2003-2010) and Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016)—and after Rousseff's impeachment until the election of Jair Bolsonaro, in 2018 (Faria 2008; Cason and Power 2009; D. B. Lopes 2011; Faria and Lopes 2019). This politicisation produced fault lines across domestic stakeholders on the appropriateness of the Brazilian national/international developmental state and along the South-South axis of Brazilian foreign policy (Waisbich 2020b). Second, the growing audit and evidence-based policymaking wave silently penetrating Brazilian public management, particularly at the federal level, accelerated by austerity measures since 2016 (Faria 2005; Filgueiras 2018; Donadelli 2020).[269] Last, the complex political-institutional consequences of the mega anti-corruption *Lava Jato* Operation, initiated in 2014, on Brazilian public affairs, public accountability dynamics, Brazilian foreign policy, and on the work of development organisations like BNDES (Avritzer and Marona 2017; E. Mello and Spektor 2018; Dye and Alencastro 2020).

These three factors affected the Brazilian 'SSC compact' in uneven ways, exposing some areas to scrutiny more than others and contributing, unevenly, to generate public accountability debates and calls for the executive to justify its policy actions on certain aspects of its global development engagements. While both the Brazil-Africa agenda and Brazil's relations with left-wing governments in Latin America (notably, Cuba and Venezuela) have been particularly targeted in the broader 'meta-accountability politics' over Brazilian foreign policy options, specific SSC projects or initiatives received less attention, notable exceptions include the ProSavana initiative with Mozambique (see Chapters 1 and 7), Brazilian leadership in the UN peace

[267] The original extract in Portuguese reads: *'Ao contrário do que se procurou difundir entre nós, a África moderna não pede compaixão, mas espera um efetivo intercâmbio econômico, tecnológico e de investimentos. (...) Essa é a estratégia Sul-Sul correta, não a que chegou a ser praticada com finalidades publicitárias, escassos benefícios econômicos e grandes investimentos diplomáticos'.*

[268] The expression 'noisy politicisation' (*politização ruidosa*, in Portuguese) was coined by Belém Lopes (2011).

[269] Early 2016, in the final months of Rousseff's government and already under fiscal austerity, the Federal government has also created a new inter-ministerial M&E unit (CMAP - *Conselho de Monitoramento e Avaliação de Políticas Públicas*, in Portuguese). The committee worked for about two years, having reduced its activities since the arrival of Bolsonaro to the Presidency. In 2018, IPEA published a new *ex-post* evaluation guide. Both have a strong results-based management/cost-effectiveness approach to evaluating public policies (INT-BR-68; INT-BR-72). For a recent discussion on subnational level dynamics, see Fernandes et al. (2020).

operation in Haiti (MINUSTAH) (see Waisbich and Pomeroy 2014), and humanitarian assistance toward Venezuelans seeking asylum in Brazil (see Charleaux 2018). The Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), as an institution, remained marginal in public SSC policy and accountability-related debates and away from either broad or narrow accountability calls, although not from experts' and CSOs' calls, as I will discuss shortly. Alternatively, BNDES so-called 'international operations' have been object of political, civil society, experts' and judicial scrutiny. Operations were also object of multiple political, management and social accountability disputes throughout PT's rule and beyond, having generated their own forms of accountability reforms, as I show in the last section.

Measuring South-South cooperation: experimentation, duelling and visibility dilemmas

Brazil's diplomatic stances on measuring SSC, as examined in Chapter 4, have been critical yet cognisant of the importance of the agenda for both policy management and country's global status-seeking ambitions. In this section, I show how this critical-conciliatory diplomatic approach has been accompanied by a wide, albeit dispersed, range of experimentations inside and outside the government to measure (quantify, report and evaluate) Brazil's South-South technical cooperation. I also show how SSC practitioners and experts have navigated the politics of evidence but also the politics of visibility embedded in these counting and accounting exercises.

Finding ways to quantify and report: Cobradi and its discontents

> [Cobradi] *is about practicing transparency and proving the usefulness of efforts at promoting cooperation, both for Brazilian citizens, who will have means for analysis, and also for the governments of other developing countries willing to better evaluate cooperation opportunities abroad.* (Antonio Patriota, Foreign Minister's foreword to *Cobradi's* second edition)[270]

'Marketing success' and finding ways to tell country's developmental success stories has been a major feature of Brazil's identity as a rising power in international development (Constantine and Shankland 2017). Already in the early 2000s, Brasília decided to 'tropicalise the MDGs',[271] as framed by one interviewee, finding nationally-relevant ways to report on its positive progress on each goal.[272] This will to tropicalise is

[270] The second edition was published in Portuguese, in 2013. The English translation came out in 2014 (IPEA/ABC 2014).
[271] INT-BR-44.
[272] Between 2004-2014, published five National Implementation Reports and hosted five editions of the Brazil MDGs Award to encourage national innovation along the goals. Brazil has also championed the transition from a 'donors-led' MDGs agenda (Fukuda-Parr 2016) to a more ambitious SDGs agenda, leading on a significantly part of the initial steps in the road to the SDGs when hosting Rio+20 Conference, in 2012.

also at the origin of the Brazilian Cooperation for International Development report (hereafter, *Cobradi* report),[273] led by the governmental think-tank IPEA in partnership with ABC.[274]

Through *Cobradi*, Brazil has been surveying and publicising its development cooperation flows since 2010.[275] *Cobradi* reverberated among the global development community because, as indicated by former Foreign Minister Patriota: 'It was the first time a developing country disclosed information on its development cooperation based on a methodology that reflected the particular characteristics of its South-South cooperation model' (IPEA/ABC 2014, foreword).[276] This systematic reporting of SSC flows outside the DAC reporting framework remains unique among rising powers (Milani 2019).

Cobradi's methodology combines quantitative information on Brazilian international development expenditures and qualitative descriptions of its cooperation praxis. It refers not only to the development flows between Southern/developing countries but also to contributions to the so-called 'global development public goods' (including contributions to multilateral organisations, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance, and refugees' protection, etc.). As such, while reflecting 'Brazilian practices' (J. B. B. Lima and Pereira Jr. 2019), *Cobradi's* 10-year old methodology is surprisingly in line with contemporary debates on 'universal development'/'beyond ODA' metrics (see Horner and Hulme 2017; Sumner et al. 2020). Lacking a formal and more robust legal framework for development cooperation—and despite IPEA's reiterated claims that *Cobradi's* operational concepts should not be interpreted as Brazilian government official position on modalities and definitions (Campos, J. B. B. Lima and Gonzalez 2012)—Brazil's official working definition of SSC became the one set in *Cobradi* reports. IPEA's disclaimer reflects a widespread recognition among Brazilian development experts and practitioners that definitions needed to be politically—rather than technically—agreed upon as part of a larger, and unfinished, consolidation effort to build a national cooperation system (Beghin 2014; Milani 2018).

To date, five editions of *Cobradi* were published, surveying flows from 2005 to 2018.[277] The last report came out in December 2020. *Cobradi* accounting remained, nonetheless, limited to 'federal expenses', leaving out information on subnational governments, public enterprises, autarchies or the judiciary.[278] *Cobradi*

[273] In Portuguese, *Cobradi* is the acronym for *Cooperação Brasileira para o Desenvolvimento Internacional*.
[274] IPEA is the most important governmental think-thank in Brazil. The Institute has been historically nested within the Ministry of Planning, which since the last ministerial reform, in January 2019, was merged with the Ministry of Economy.
[275] According to national experts, other quantification exercises were conducted before, but they were very preliminary and remained internal to ABC (INT-BR-44).
[276] Other than the Brazilian government, research participants from other countries referred to *Cobradi* as a source of inspiration and/or learning for their own quantification efforts (INT-IN-11; INT-OSS-11; INT-OSS-10; INT-OSS-12; INT-CH-5).
[277] The first edition, published in 2010, covers the years of 2005-2009. The second one, published in 2013, includes data from 2010. The third edition, published in 2016, refers to the period between 2011-2013. The fourth one, published in 2018, contains data for 2014-2016. The last edition came out in December 2020 and contains data from 2017 and 2018.
[278] For instance, IPEA's own technical cooperation, which includes flagship initiatives such the Brazil-UNDP International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) and the *SocioProtection.Org* platform, is not fully accounted. Neither are the full operational costs associated with the Brazil-Africa and Brazil-Latin America Integration Universities, UNILAB and UNILA, respectively (INT-BR-26; INT-BR-44; INT-BR-34; INT-BR-6).

methodology also left out development finance-like flows from BNDES, another longstanding demand from the Brazilian SSC policy community (Leite et al. 2014). This narrow focus made several experts affirm that *Cobradi* was not properly measuring Brazilian cooperation. According to one interviewee: '*Cobradi* probably only captures 25-30% of the cooperation provided by Brazil, on an optimistic projection'.[279]

Aware of these limitations, *Cobradi* researchers often described their tool as an 'ever changing effort', 'always in-the-making', and a 'learning journey'.[280] In 2010, SSC was high on the presidential agenda and showcasing Brazilian efforts was politically important.[281] Lula himself authored the preface to the first edition. After him, however, *Cobradi's* journey closely mirrored the 'ebbs and flows' of Brazilian SSC (Cesarino 2019; also Appendix 3). *Cobradi* was intended as an annual effort but this was never the case and none of the following editions had a foreword signed by the President. Table 1, below, shows this journey across time.

Practicing transparency, therefore, has not been easy. Like ODA metrics, *Cobradi's* methodology was the object of successive reforms and multiple debates. The *Cobradi* team has faced political, methodological and technical challenges to count Brazilian cooperation, resulting from divergences on what should be counted as SSC and from the fragmentation of Brazil's SSC system. This included disagreements on what cooperation modalities to include (i.e., BNDES export credit operations) and on how to name them. It also included definitional issues such as whether to account for 'fully concessional expenditures' (as stated in the first report) or 'public expenditures that are neither investments nor grants, except in the case of official donations' (as stated in the second report). *Cobradi* researchers also faced political challenges to mobilise support within IPEA and among Brazilian implementing agencies. Collating data on development operation-related expenditure and practices was challenging since Presidents after Lula (Rousseff, Temer and Bolsonaro) showed less and less interest in the agenda and many implementing agencies were entering their own 'cooperation fatigue' (Farias 2018; Cesarino 2019; Waisbich 2020b). Furthermore, several institutions had no proper records of their past cooperation initiatives or lacked a comprehensive overview of who was engaging in SSC, with whom and on what, mirroring the very fragmentation of SSC within Brazil (Cabral and Weinstock 2010; Leite et al. 2014).[282]

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[279] INT-BR-44.

[280] INT-BR-36; INT-BR-35.

[281] Insiders suggested that President Lula wanted to present the first *Cobradi* to the world in his speech at the UN General Assembly of that year (Campos, Lima, and Gonzalez 2012). The report could only be finalised a few months later, in December, the last month of Lula's government.

[282] INT-BR-34; INT-BR-55.

Table 1 - *Cobradi's* journey (2010-2020)

Edition	Publication year	Coverage	Number of institutions surveyed	Brazil's President at the time of publication	Foreword author
1st	2010	2005-2009	66	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Brazil's President
2nd	2013	2010	91	Dilma Rousseff	Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Brazil's Foreign Minister
3rd	2016	2011-2013	95	Michel Temer	Ernesto Lozardo, IPEA's President
4th	2018	2014-2016	126	Michel Temer	Ernesto Lozardo, IPEA's President
5th	2020	2017-2018	243/262	Jair Bolsonaro	Ivan T. M. Oliveira, Director of International Studies, Political and Economic Relations (Dinte/IPEA)

Source: IPEA/ABC 2011; 2014; 2017; 2018; IPEA 2020

Cobradi and other measurement initiatives across the Brazilian SSC ecosystem generated, moreover, their own forms of inter-bureaucratic competition, tensions and anxieties.[283] '*Cobradi* focal points'—many of them acting as 'ambassadors of SSC'[284] within SSC implementing institutions—reported challenges to justify internally (to their peers and superiors) the need to devote time to managing information on something that was deemed marginal to their overall mandates.[285] *Cobradi*-driven transparency was also challenging for 'SSC bureaucracies' in what it revealed of internal thematic priorities and/or management disfunctions, including pay gaps.[286] Anxieties are also found in ABC and IPEA's back-and-forth of *Cobradi's* excel sheets with figures on SSC flows per country based on a fear that rankings would diverge from the official commitment to geographically focus its technical cooperation in Latin America and Portuguese-

[283] A similar point was made about 'aid transparency' by Honig and Weaver (2019).

[284] Here use the term 'ambassadors' in the sense employed by Porto de Oliveira (2017) to describe the role of particular individuals as champions of certain policies and issues in the context of policy diffusion.

[285] INT-BR-34; INT-BR-47. João Brigido, researcher at IPEA and *Cobradi's* coordinator, made a similar point in an International Measurement event hosted by ABC, in 2018, I attended, when commenting on *Cobradi's* learnings of the strategic importance of having senior political staff within implementing agencies as 'Cobradi focal points', rather than technical-level ones.

[286] INT-BR-55.

speaking countries in Africa.[287] Transparency-related anxieties can also be seen in IPEA's resistance to publish *Cobradi's* microdata in an open format, despite a longstanding demand from academia and civil society for open-access (ASUL 2017), which it end up doing only for the 2014-2016 survey.[288] [289]

Against the odds, *Cobradi* has resisted the political turbulence by adapting and changing itself. After releasing the fourth edition, in 2018, the *Cobradi* team announced their intention to change the reporting methodology and move to a two-track model of continuous online publishing of expenditures, based on budgetary analysis, and periodic narrative reports on cooperation practices (J. B. B. Lima and Pereira Jr. 2019).[290] That said, whether *Cobradi* researchers will be able to move forward with their plans under Bolsonaro's government remains uncertain.[291]

Retrospectively, is clear that the ways *Cobradi's* metrics were designed and evolved impacted on SSC accountability dynamics within Brazil. By limiting the definition of development cooperation, excluding development finance and subnational initiatives, the Brazilian government has only committed to be (internationally) accountable for the modalities included in the report (Milani and Carvalho 2013), rendering the remaining ones officially invisible. Certainly, IPEA's *Cobradi* team worked as convening actor, and as an internal accountability pressure point within the *Esplanada*,[292] inciting implementing agencies to publicise and thus open their activities to scrutiny.[293] However, limited to its transparency functions, *Cobradi* remained a 'toothless' accountability tool (Fox 2007b). This reflects the fact that neither IPEA nor ABC had the political power to promote cross-agency transparency reforms and the necessary political support at the Presidential level, backed by a strategic view on SSC and a national law to implement it (Westmann 2017; Milani 2018).[294] The ways other stakeholders, within and outside the state, perceived these limitations and

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[287] INT-BR-35; INT-BR-36.

[288] *Cobradi* 2014-2016 micro-data (*microdados*, in Portuguese) can be found at https://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=34507&Itemid=433 (last access: 20/12/2020).

[289] Beyond *Cobradi*, transparency-related anxieties also surfaced when the former CGFome—a unit created within Itamaraty, in 2004, to help Brazil globally diffusing the knowledge of the Zero Hunger Strategy and responsible for Brazilian food assistance and some food security-related technical cooperation including *PAA Africa*—decided in 2013 to launch its own transparency portal, SIGMA (see https://prezi.com/4b4-w0cvrwj5/funcionamento-do-sigma-cgfome/ (last access: 28/07/2020). The move made ABC wary about other institutions 'oversharing' and creating extra-pressure on them to publicise more. After the impeachment, CGFome was dismantled and ABC became officially responsible for coordinating Brazilian humanitarian cooperation (see Suyama, Waisbich and Leite 2016) and SIGMA was never completed (INT-BR-50).

[290] INT-BR-35; INT-BR-36.

[291] During my fieldwork period, in 2019, Cobradi researchers were working to publish 2017-2018 data, already in the new format. At that time, Cobradi was already losing support inside IPEA and with ABC. This data was finally released by IPEA in December 2020, a few days before the submission of this thesis.

[292] *Esplanada* is a widely used term to refer to the Brazilian Federal Executive. *Esplanada dos Ministérios*, the Ministries Promenade, refers to the location in Brasilia where most line-ministries buildings are located.

[293] INT-BR-2.

[294] There is little evidence, for instance, that SSC-related knowledge management within implementing agencies has significantly changed to either feed *Cobradi* or achieve harmonisation across the Brazilian federal executive (INT-BR-35; INT-BR-36; INT-BR-33; INT-BR-44; INT-BR-55; INT-BR-41).

challenged them is not only at the origins of *Cobradi's* successive reforms but also of SSC measurement 'duelling' inside Brazil, to which I turn now.

Measurement 'duelling'

The fragmentation of and competition between accountability tools and/or infrastructures found in *Aidland* is also observable in Brazil. Despite its innovative character, *Cobradi* had many discontents and was countered by other governmental and non-governmental 'SSC counting initiatives'. Their emergence shows the degree of measurement 'duelling' inside Brazil.[295]

A first competing initiative was the proposal for a Brazilian International Development Platform, led by the Strategic Affairs division within the Presidency in partnership with ABC.[296] The Platform started to be designed in 2016, under Temer's presidency, under the same public transparency rationale found in *Cobradi*, namely that development cooperation is a public policy subjected to transparency requirements under Brazil's Access to Information Law. Yet the Platform differs from *Cobradi* by being more 'quantification-centred' and more attentive to capturing development cooperation inflows and outflows (known in Brazil as 'received' and 'provided' cooperation), including from/to the federal government and from/to state-enterprises, subnational and non-state actors.[297] Moreover, the Platform is being conceived in a post-PT era by an alternative 'Paris-philo' policy-epistemic community within the Brazilian state,[298] comprised of development experts within IPEA not currently leading on *Cobradi* and ABC experts that now seek (or have come to accept) a harmonisation with OECD methodologies and greater dialogue with TOSSD after Brazil's bid to join the organisation in 2016.[299] The shift towards OECD is at the core of the new proposal, even if not always admitted by Brazilian diplomats or ABC representatives.[300] Experts leading on the effort have a clear intent for the Platform to replace *Cobradi* in a near future as the Brazil's official quantification and reporting tool. Its future is, nonetheless, dependent on the ability of those leading on this effort to keep the 'bureaucratic momentum'[301] considering Bolsonaro's government lack of interest in the SSC agenda

[295] The term 'duelling' was first utilised by PWYF (2017) to characterise the measurement and reporting landscape in the US and the competition between 'aid tracking tools'.
[296] The Platform was inserted under the umbrella of a long-term development thinking strategic initiative named '*Brasil 3 Tempos*', conducted in partnership with UNDP. See '*Projeto Brasil 3 Tempos: 2007, 2015 e 2022*', available at http://www.iea.usp.br/pesquisa/projetos-institucionais/projetos-especias-anteriores/brasil-3-tempos-1 (last access: 23/10/2020).
[297] INT-BR-33; INT-BR-44; INT-BR-47.
[298] A similar finding was described by Zea (2016) in Mexico's diplomatic body, to which he named the 'Paris and New York courants' to differentiate those within Mexican diplomacy closer to traditional donors and those closer to the G77+China.
[299] INT-BR-44. This is clearly stated in the narrative justifying and describing the Platform (Draft Platform ToR, from February 2018), to which the researcher had access.
[300] INT-BR-33; INT-BR-44; INT-BR-47.
[301] This expression was first introduced to me by Michelle Morais de Sá e Silva as referring to the set of bureaucratic dynamics that have sustained Brazilian SSC amidst the presidential retreat phase.

and ABC's current cautious, low-profile, 'below-the-radar survival approach' (Waisbich 2021; also Appendix 3).[302]

Around the same time, a different infrastructure was proposed by a group of non-governmental knowledge actors led by the independent think-tank *Articulação SUL* in partnership with Oxfam Brazil.[303] Their proposal consisted of an open-data methodology to count Brazilian SSC using public budget information systems.[304] Their quantification efforts 'from below' aimed at countering perceived shortcomings of governmental transparency initiatives (including *Cobradi* and ABC's project database).[305] Civil society groups have long criticised official efforts for their limited scope, predictability and frequency (Beghin 2014; Waisbich, Silva and Suyama 2017). Their methodology was presented as 'complementary' to *Cobradi* while also 'more appropriate' than IPEA's surveys to capture what is planned and spent by the Brazilian state over a longer time span and on an ongoing basis.[306] Besides circumventing *Cobradi's* publication delays, they also emphasised the public accountability and participation gains of using publicly available open-data budgetary tools (L. Lopes and Costa 2018). While echoing budget transparency arguments from 'aid monitoring movements', this civil society-led initiative strongly relied on previous activism on budgetary open-data in Brazil from national CSOs like the Brasília-based INESC.[307]

Despite failing to consolidate itself into a full-fledged 'tracking tool', this civil society-led pilot has, nonetheless, unveiled a complementary set of measurement politics around Brazilian SSC.[308] First, counting 'from below' revealed a certain degree of invisibility of Brazilian SSC within the federal budget. Not only existing budget information systems worked according to budgetary-administrative logics that do not allowed for development cooperation to be tracked as an unified set of expenditures, but also certain modalities, such as BNDES export credits, were accounted separately from the rest of federal expenses

[302] Though the original plans were to have the new infrastructure finished in 2019, the Platform and the online *Observatory of International Cooperation for Development* to accompany it are not yet in place.

[303] This was developed under a project named *'Looking for South-South Cooperation in the Federal Budget'*. See (ASUL/Oxfam Brasil 2017; 2018). Other organisations involved include: *Ação Educativa*, the BRICS Policy Centre, the Brazilian Network for Peoples' Integration - REBRIP, Conectas Human Rights, MSF Brasil, among others. The project had an Oversight Group comprised of representatives of IPEA/NeST Brazil, Conectas Human Rights, BRICS Policy Centre, Development Initiatives, LABMUNDO/UERJ and Oxfam Brasil (ASUL/Oxfam Brasil 2017).

[304] Namely the federal government financial management systems (SIAFI and its public interface SIOP), the Pluri-Annual Plans (known as PPA), and the Transparency Portal. Available at https://www.siop.planejamento.gov.br/modulo/login/index.html#/, https://www.gov.br/economia/pt-br/assuntos/planejamento-e-orcamento/plano-plurianual-ppa, and http://www.portaltransparencia.gov.br/, respectively.

[305] Available at http://www.abc.gov.br/Projetos/pesquisa (last access: 29/092020).

[306] ASUL-Oxfam historical series started in 2000, rather than 2005 as in Cobradi, and was intended to be continuous, allowing for data to be automatically retrieved annually, according to the Brazilian fiscal year calendar. Interestingly, the survey/questionnaire methods have been also used, criticised and eventually superseded within *Aidland* (ASUL/Oxfam Brasil 2017).

[307] INECS has actively participated in SSC debates, notably on food security and BRICS/NDB issues, strongly advocating for transparency and participation issues (Beghin 2014; Poskitt, Shankland and Taela 2016; INT-BR-63).

[308] The reasons for that include lack of funding since the original Oxfam grant was only for a pilot project. Shortly after the end of this project, in 2018, Oxfam Brasil went through a programmatic restructuring and Brazilian international development cooperation was considered less of a priority when compared to other domestic agendas (INT-BR-1; INT-BR-43; INT-BR-63).

(ASUL/Oxfam Brasil 2018). Trilateral cooperation, in-kind cooperation, or national experts' time devoted to technical cooperation were also invisible due to levels of data aggregation in existing budget lines. This partial (in)visibility corroborates Brazilian diplomatic discomfort that a purely monetary quantification can render SSC 'development effort' invisible. Showing this can be the case also domestically. More broadly, the partial (in)visibility further reflects the lack of institutionalisation of SSC within Brazil and dispersed footprint in budgetary planning and accounting tools. Nonetheless, while searching for SSC expenses in the national budget, CSOs have found other forms of SSC-related spending overlooked in *Cobradi*, such as expenditures with regional integration (e.g., schools and health clinics in frontier areas and cross-border regional infrastructure projects). These 'lost and found' dynamics—in the words of ASUL and Oxfam Brasil—reveal not only the levels of measurement 'duelling' inside Brazil but also the always constructed and still disputed nature of what fits inside the 'SSC box'.

Third, this attempt to devise alternative measurement tools, 'from below', illustrates a certain type of civil society mobilisation that uses budget transparency to dispute SSC priorities. In their own terms: 'Opening the black box of SSC policymaking visible in budget allocation can guide constructive engagement, encourage and strengthen existing initiatives, unveil contradictions and ruptures and rethink Brazilian SSC priorities' (ASUL/Oxfam Brasil 2017). This discourse firmly positions knowledge groups and CSOs involved in the project as 'critical collaborators' of the Brazilian state (Berrón and Brant 2015; Milhorance and Bursztyn 2017; also Chapter 7). Acting as 'SSC constituencies', echoing Lancaster's (2007) notion of 'aid constituencies', their disputes over priorities and figures were also intended to reinforce the argument that spending on SSC was 'still low', thus helping to make the case for increasing cooperation flows.[309]

In sum, the multiplication of quantification initiatives—and intra-state and state-society 'duelling'—are signs of the political, institutional and epistemic battles over SSC measurement in Brazil. Disagreements illustrate ongoing intra and inter-institutional competition, as much as political disputes over how to count Brazilian 'development effort', over the best methodological tools and their purposes, and over whether and how to use these instruments. Moreover, the 'duelling' is also a sign of Brazilian shifting SSC landscapes and ongoing negotiations—within IPEA; between the *Cobradi* team, ABC and the Presidency; or between those leading on official efforts and other practitioners inside and outside the state—over country's international role as a provider.

Experimenting with evaluating technical cooperation: (in)visibility and mutual gains dilemmas

Visibility issues are also at the core of growing SSC evaluation efforts in Brazil, which are taking place in tandem with increasing national efforts to reform the national SSC system. In the early 2010s, Brazilian

[309] In the year of 2010, the peak year according to *Cobradi's* historical series the ratio was approximately 0,04% of Brazilian GDP in 2010 (IPEA/ABC 2018). This same argument was equally used by rights-based NGOs regarding refugee flows when calling for Brazilian government to 'do more' (Charleaux 2018).

SSC entered a consolidation phase (Ramanzini Jr., Mariano and Almeida 2015; Milani 2017),[310] and several national institutions started to invest in strengthening the management and/or governance of their SSC initiatives. At ABC, there were changes in the organogram, new arrangements to deliver SSC (including through trilateral cooperation), and new management instruments, notably the 2010 internal project management system and the 2013 *Manual of South-South Technical Cooperation Management*.[311] ABC also introduced new ways of working (based on scoping missions to design/co-construct cooperation projects, joint monitoring committees with partners[312] and evaluation missions). Experimenting with evaluating SSC, I contend, was an integral part of these (still unfinished) institutional strengthening efforts.[313]

The motivations behind ABC and implementing agencies' *will to evaluate* Brazilian technical cooperation initiatives, came from three main sources. First, their own internal management and learning concerns to know what was 'working' on the ground after the expansionary wave of the previous decade. Second, their national and international reputation and policy struggles. Third, their interaction with the highly assessed and audited development apparatus, mainly through triangular cooperation. These pushes also converged with mobilisation by domestic policy communities and knowledge actors wanting to strengthen SSC measurement (and the broader 'SSC industry') and their will and expertise to serve as 'partners' in constructing these accountability tools (Berrón and Brant 2015; Waisbich 2021).[314]

The political-institutional importance of producing evaluations grew continuously within ABC throughout the decade. Support among ABC leadership increased steadily, albeit not always assertively, since the publication of ABC 2013 *Manual*, where the Agency presents in detail its approach to evaluation.[315] With time, new institutional layers were added: in 2015, ABC adopted specific governance instruments to guide its trilateral partnerships with Germany and UNICEF and released, in 2017, its *Guidelines on Trilateral Cooperation* (MRE/GIZ 2015; ABC/UNICEF 2015; ABC 2019).[316] Around the same time, ABC has also

[310] In the Brazilian case, and for ABC in particular, Milani (2017) describes an institutional building phase (1994-2008) followed by a period of tentative reforms and modernisation, since 2008.

[311] Named *Sistema de Informações Gerenciais de Acompanhamento de Projetos - SIGAP*, in Portuguese. See http://www.abc.gov.br/sigap/ (last access: 23/10/2020).

[312] In Portuguese, *Missão de Prospecção* and *Comitê de Acompanhamento de Projetos - CAP*, respectively.

[313] During Rousseff's second term, there were internal debates around reforming ABC. One of the major proposals was to create an independent agency combining development cooperation and investment promotion The proposal was never pursued due to, among other things, strong opposition within MRE, which saw the value of keeping the technical/humanitarian development cooperation separated from the trade/investment portfolio (Leite et al. 2014). Since then, no major intent to reform ABC was pursued.

[314] INT-BR-10; INT-BR-72.

[315] Former ABC Director, Marcos Farani (2008-2012) was the first one that attempted to establish a direct dialogue with traditional development actors like the UNDP and the UK on enhancing ABC's capacity to monitor and evaluate Brazilian SSC. The topic remained in the agenda of subsequent Directors, João Almino (2015-2017) and Ruy Pereira (since 2018). (INT-BR-6; INT-BR-39; INT-BR-58; INT-BR-44).

[316] ABC-UNICEF and ABC-GIZ guidelines were revised and updated in 2017 and 2019, respectively.

established a Planning Department,[317] which led to the creation of the informal working group on evaluation (Milani 2017).[318]

This was also the time that ABC and implementing agencies, including the Ministry of Health and its public health institute Fiocruz,[319] the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa) and the National Service for Industrial Training (SENAI) started to experiment with SSC evaluations (Costa 2018). In the beginning these were mostly internal reviews and short-evaluation missions, but this was followed, from 2015 onwards, by more robust external and independent *ex-post* evaluations and a greater willingness to publicise them.[320]

Communicating results had become important to Brazilian 'SSC bureaucracies'. Following the expansionary years, several felt the need to 'professionalise' and (re)gain control over the narratives about their SSC work to both domestic and global audiences.[321] In different ways, institutions like ABC, the Brazil-WFP Centre of Excellence, or BNDES invested in strengthening communications and outreach efforts,[322] including through M&E. The Health Ministry, for instance, ran an internal evaluation working group between 2010-2011, years before ABC set up its own working group, in 2017, to develop a national SSC evaluation strategy; a work that remains unfinished.[323] Besides the diplomatic drivers, their will to evaluate and communicate SSC responded to a general perception—shared by other Southern providers—of having to internally justify working abroad despite having numerous domestic development problems at home (UNDP China 2017; van der Westhuizen and Milani 2019; Cárdenas 2019).

Experimenting with evaluation has, nonetheless, expanded unevenly both within ABC and across the vast landscape of Brazilian technical SSC initiatives and implementing agencies (Costa 2018).[324] In light of ABC's internal diversity (what my participants often referred as 'the many ABCs inside ABC'[325]), some departments have engaged more in experimenting with *ex-post* external evaluations than others. This was the case of technical agricultural cooperation on cotton (hereafter, the 'cotton portfolio') and trilateral cooperation with international organisations on a range of social policies (hereafter, TSSC). Embrapa and

[317] *Coordenação-Geral de Planejamento e Comunicação*, in Portuguese.
[318] INT-BR-6; INT-BR-39.
[319] Fiocruz stands for Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, *Fundação Oswaldo Cruz*, in Portuguese.
[320] INT-BR-2; INT-BR-3; INT-BR-58; INT-BR-40. Embrapa, for instance, conducted in 2013-2014 an internal evaluation of its flagship technical cooperation project *Cotton-4* (Bueno 2018). According to one interviewee, later Embrapa also internally evaluated other smaller SSC projects, including a project on dairy cattle (with Burkina Faso) and on manioc (with Togo) (INT-BR-2). For a discussion on ABC internal evaluations, in the case of bilateral technical cooperation projects with Guinea Bissau, see Andrade (2014).
[321] INT-BR-55; INT-BR-2; INT-BR-3; INT-BR-40.
[322] The Ministry of Health enhanced its publicity efforts by releasing multilingual newsletters targeting colleagues within the ministry, Brazilian society and international partners (INT-BR-55). A similar 'internal convincing effort' was reported by a cooperation expert within Embrapa (INT-BR-2).
[323] INT-BR-10; INT-BR-6; INT-BR-55.
[324] INT-BR-64; INT-BR-14; INT-BR-39; INT-BR-6.
[325] INT-BR-64; INT-BR-10; INT-BR-6.

ABC have been particularly invested in publicising external evaluations of Brazil's cotton portfolio: first, the external evaluation of *Cotton-4*, published in 2015, in a pioneer joint effort between both institutions (see Chapter 4), and then the evaluations of subsequent cotton projects, including the *Cotton Vitoria* and the *Shire Zambeze*.[326] After *Cotton-4*, ABC co-coordinated or participated in other publicly available external assessment efforts of Brazil's TSSC including the *Brazil-FAO South-South Trilateral Cooperation Programme* (2016-2018), the *Brazil-WFP Centre of Excellence Against Hunger* (2016-2017) and the *Brazil-UNICEF South-South Trilateral Cooperation Programme* (2019-2020) (see Appendix 5).

Other public institutions, however, showed less interest in and/or capacity to assess their own SSC efforts. The former Ministry of Social Development (MDS) is a case in point.[327] Since the early 2000s, Brazilian social policy expertise and policy solutions, like the Conditional Cash Transfer programme *Bolsa Família,* has been object of numerous technical cooperation demands (Leite, Pomeroy and Suyama 2015; Porto de Oliveira 2020). Yet development cooperation has remained a fragile, understaffed, and never fully institutionalised agenda within the Ministry. As an operational strategy, from 2010 onwards, MDS has strongly relied on multilaterals (including the World Bank, UNDP and UNICEF) to document its policies and channel technical exchanges with partners in the Global South (Pomeroy, Suyama and Waisbich 2019). Under these circumstances, the Ministry has not developed a will or need to evaluate its SSC. Struggling to secure social spending at home amidst growing fiscal restraint, MDS evaluation unit[328] was rather concerned with creating robust knowledge to prove *Bolsa Familia*'s positive outcomes inside Brazil and protect it from the threats it received from political opposition (Tomazini 2018). According to a former MDS staffer:

> *Hardly we would have suggested to evaluate SSC because we were not even managing to conduct the implementation and/or design evaluations we wanted* [for the national programmes] (…) *Had we done an assessment, the major finding would be that we had no cooperation. What I think we needed was an assessment to show the implementation of this policy. To show the problems and bottlenecks we had: lack of staff, lack of manual, lack of strategic guidance. What we needed was an assessment that could have systematised the perception, that several people had at the time, of how little prepared we were to cooperate.*[329]

Ultimately, evaluations of South-South technical cooperation increased in numbers since the mid-2010s, but efforts remain incipient and unevenly distributed across the *Esplanada*. Reasons for that include individual activism from those leading and working on certain areas (as opposed to uninterest or resistance

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[326] See ABC (2020). For more on the Cotton portfolio, see Moreira (2020).

[327] MDS was downgraded in 2016, once Temer became the president, and was merged with the then Ministry of Agrarian Development under the new Ministry of Social and Agrarian Development (MDSA). In 2019, under Bolsonaro, MDSA was split and the parts of the bureaucracy dealing with social development were once again downgraded and integrated into another large arrangement, the Citizenship Ministry, which merged the former MDS, the Ministry of Culture and the Human Rights Secretariat.

[328] Named *Secretaria de Avaliação e Gestão da Informação - SAGI,* in Portuguese. For more on SAGI's work, see Natalino, Pinto, and Custodio (2013).

[329] INT-BR-68.

in others),[330] but also sector or modality-specific dynamics. Some pioneering implementing institutions had either private sector results-based mindset, like SENAI, or evidence-based scientific organisational cultures, like the Ministry of Health, or both, like Embrapa (Costa 2018).[331] Others, like the former MDS and the National Fund for Educational Development (FNDE), were increasingly reliant on 'outsourcing development cooperation arrangements' with UN agencies and thus relying on their documenting and reporting procedures.

Overall, my findings show little internal pressure, from within public institutions also working as 'SSC bureaucracies' and even from policy communities outside the state and civil society, for SSC initiatives to be evaluated.[332] Interviewees also indicated little or no demands from their Southern counterparts for this kind of justification. Rather the will to evaluate came, therefore, mostly from an intention by ABC and/or specific implementing actors (both national agencies and UN organisations) to use evidence gathered in evaluations to back domestic policy disputes and showcase successes with Brazilian SSC in equally disputed global policy arenas. Unsurprisingly then the political nature of policy evaluation efforts has led assessments of Brazilian SSC to different forms of intra and inter-bureaucratic disputes, as I will explore next.

When bureaucratic politics meets the politics of evaluation

Brazil's cotton portfolio and trilateral cooperation initiatives offer insights into bureaucratic and evidence politics shaping SSC evaluations and the (in)visibility and mutual gains dilemmas large SSC providers face when assessing their actions on the ground. The cotton portfolio is a financially stable and prestigious area for ABC, Itamaraty and for other governmental institutions. In the words of one Brazilian development expert: 'Cotton has political visibility'.[333] According to both practitioners' and academic accounts, the successive external assessments of cotton projects illustrate the continued use of evaluations not only for management purposes (to adjust and expand the programme) but also to assist the country to build an image around this portfolio and attract new partnerships (Bueno 2018; Moreira 2020; also Chapter 4).[334] The 2015 *Cotton-4* evaluation was also the first external evaluation in Brazil where SSC principles where assessed,[335] reflecting practitioners' and knowledge actors' (like the NeST-affiliated *Articulação SUL* and the BRICS Policy Centre) will to operationalise 'Southern-ways' to conceive SSC results and contribute to the emerging global debates around measuring SSC (BPC/ASUL 2017; Rizzo 2019b).

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[330] INT-BR-10; INT-BR-59; INT-BR-2.

[331] INT-BR-10; INT-BR-58.

[332] In the rare cases where development cooperation was embedded in well-established national policies or plans, as in the case of National Plan on Food and Nutritional Security, more incentives existed for SSC initiatives to be assessed. But this was the exception rather than the rule. For a discussion on how cooperation was embedded in national efforts in the case of food and nutrition security, see Beghin (2014). For a discussion of embeddedness in the case of health, see Esteves, Gomes and Fonseca (2016).

[333] INT-BR-10.

[334] INT-BR-2; INT-BR-64.

[335] INT-BR-64; INT-BR-17.

ABC was the leading actor in *Cotton-4's* external evaluation effort and its enthusiasm found great echo at the time in Embrapa's International Relations Secretariat[336] and in the National Management School (ENAP).[337] Enthusiasm became less assured, however, for assessments of other cotton projects in light of Embrapa's progressive retreat from the broader SSC agenda. Embrapa's 'cooperation fatigue' grew out of a mounting unease with the lack of clarity on what the company was gaining from cooperating with least developed countries in Africa (Cesarino 2013; Farias 2018; Waisbich 2020b). According to one interviewee, disengagement was also influenced by the negative public repercussion of the 'ProSavana crisis' (see Chapters 1 and 7), which contributed to make Embrapa's leadership more averse to South-South technical cooperation.[338]

Embrapa is a telling case of support to the evaluation agenda being shaped by fluctuating levels of internal agreement on the value of SSC within implementing institutions. Once a poster-child of Brazilian SSC, and despite having conducted internal *and* external evaluations of its SSC initiatives, the agenda inside Embrapa is far from consolidated. Not only the overall SSC portfolio lost its political relevance within Embrapa since 2013, but also specific incentives to expand SSC M&E efforts have not been institutionalised. A similar story could be told about the former MDS and its own unease with the SSC agenda. Both Embrapa and MDS illustrate how years of expanded international activism have either strained implementing partners or simply failed to consolidate organisational cultures to sustain more stabilised SSC routines.

Brazilian TSSC reveals a different set of evaluation politics. As stated in Chapter 4, triangular cooperation initiatives have been the major modality and the channel through which *Aidland's* M&E standards and practices have infused Brazilian SSC. This has happened through more or less direct pressure or incentives on the Brazilian government, namely ABC but also the then CGFome in the case of *PAA Africa* or the Brazil-WFP CEAH, to expand the M&E component of existing initiatives. As mentioned, these first external evaluations of TSSC were used, by both Brazilian SSC bureaucracies and Brazil-based offices of UN agencies, to convince others within *Aidland* that SSC was working. As explained by one interviewee:

> *Some people inside our organisation are convinced of the value-added of SSC, but we have decided to pilot with Brazil because SSC is still a small unit within our headquarters. We are doing that to generate evidence from what works with Brazil to be able to scale up regionally and globally. It is about showing that is possible to own donors and to be able to tell them we are improving.*[339]

[336] The Secretariat was the division within Embrapa responsible for coordinating the company's technical cooperation with developing countries. The division was dismantled in 2018 and part of Embrapa's technical cooperation became part of what is today called Strategic Relations Secretariat, under the Multilateral Relations Unit.
[337] INT-BR-10; INT-BR-2; INT-BR-64; INT-BR-62.
[338] Importantly, Embrapa's official position was, and remained throughout the crisis, that the company's involvement with ProSavana was limited to the 'technical exchanges' not the more 'contested aspects' of the initiative related to private sector-led agribusiness investments (INT-BR-2).
[339] INT-BR-65.

Yet using evaluations to enhance the external visibility of Brazilian SSC meant for ABC and other national implementing agencies to negotiate their own engagement and visibility in these multi-partner arrangements.[340] Political visibility in TSSC is an important issue for Brasília[341] and ABC has grown increasingly 'distressed', as framed by one participant[342], with what it perceived as an 'undue invisibility' of Brazil to partners on the ground when activities are implemented by large UN agencies.[343] Invisibility was 'unfair', in the words of an ABC expert, not only because Brazil is actually funding the exchanges but also because 'erasing Brazil' could compromise SSC praxis by diluting horizontality principles in the ways of working and delivering cooperation.[344] These multiple negotiations resulted, for instance, in ABC's role in evaluations not being always one of leadership. ABC did not lead on the first exercises, including the monitoring of *PAA Africa* in 2015-2016 and Brazil-WFP Centre of Excellence evaluation, in 2016.[345] An important shift was observed, nonetheless, in the evaluation of the Brazil-UNICEF TSSC Programme, in 2019, when both parties agreed on combining ABC's desire to conduct an evaluation sensitive to SSC principles and UNICEF's own strong M&E culture.[346]

Evaluation dynamics equally overlapped with broader negotiations between Brazilian 'SSC bureaucracies' and UN agencies over 'mutual accountability' in triangular cooperation. For several interviewees, the kinds of accountability pressures and incentives multilaterals exerted on the Brazilian government to comply with the multidirectional accountability regimes that rule the UN development system have yet to be translated into accountability from them to Brazilian counterparts. UN agencies were often perceived as 'black box' themselves: failing to justify how they managed and employed the resources received from Brazil to operationalise South-South technical cooperation.[347] On the one hand, these concerns echo a 'mistrust' found between DAC members and the multilaterals they fund (Macdonald and Miller-Dawkins 2015;

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[340] INT-BR-6; INT-BR-14; INT-BR-41; INT-BR-16; INT-BR-52; INT-BR-65.

[341] INT-BR-16; INT-BR-52; INT-BR-6; INT-BR-14; INT-BR-41; INT-BR-37.

[342] INT-BR-41.

[343] There is evidence for backing this perception in recent Brazilian SSC evaluations (ASUL/Move 2017; ASUL 2020). Kasia Baran also reports a similar finding in her doctoral research on Haiti (personal communication with Kasia Baran, 2020). Chenoy and Joshi (2016, 97) report a similar concern by India on cooperation with multilaterals reducing the 'public-relations edge' that countries seek and making policy makers wary of dominance by traditional donors.

[344] These views were expressed in an international seminar on measurement, organised by ABC, in 2018, I attended.

[345] INT-BR-26; INT-BR-73; INT-BR-50; INT-BR-6; INT-BR-14. In the case of *PAA Africa*, this Brazil-FAO-WFP programme was coordinated by the then CGFome and its knowledge activities led by the Brazil-UNDP International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth. As for the Centre of Excellence, the external evaluation was led by the Centre's team with little inputs from ABC on the initial evaluation design.

[346] The methodological compromise found by the external evaluators was to follow UNICEF's Results-Based Evaluation standards (comprised of OECD-classic evaluation criteria: relevance of the intervention; effectiveness; efficient use of resources; and sustainability of the intervention's benefits) combined with an operationalisation of SSC principles in different evaluation indicators (INT-BR-65; also see Chapter 3). According to the evaluation report, a key assumption backing the assessment was that SSC principles where 'enablers of quality and effectiveness' and that assessing how SSC principles were operationalised in the Brazil-UNICEF Program and how they worked in practice would help to 'understand how this particular TSSC Programme unfolded' (ASUL 2020, 29).

[347] INT-BR-55; INT-BR-37; INT-BR-50; INT-BR-52; INT-BR-49.

Sovacool, Naudé Fourie and Tan-Mullins 2019).[348] On the other, they reflect broader negotiations taking place around lines of responsibility and horizontality in and around triangular cooperation (OECD 2016; Zoccal 2020a).

Power asymmetries also contributed to make evaluations co-managed by ABC and UN agencies only marginally valued, incorporated and/or appropriated by Brazilian implementing agencies and by the other Southern partner.[349] Frequently, evaluations have exacerbated existing dynamics and tensions, including the fact that Brazilian implementing agencies (i.e., FNDE in the case of cooperation on school feeding implemented by WFP or FAO) had little capacity to closely follow projects on the ground and end up delegating implementation to UN agencies, becoming the 'principals' in their accountability relations with the UN and with ABC.[350] In this 'outsourced' modality, Brazilian civil servants are far remote from the overall cooperation cycle and thus cut from many of the 'accountability lines' to both domestic publics and Southern partners. The more the managing of SSC evolved further away from national implementing agencies the more they became invisible in the complex SSC accountability chains.

Lastly, TSSC evaluations have also contributed to reinforce power dynamics within development partnerships in which evaluations are used as a tool to assure 'value-for-money' in a complex chain that includes UN agencies having to report on their results of doing SSC to their sceptical Northern 'principals' at the headquarters' level rather than a learning tool for all parties involved. In the words of one evaluator, thought having advanced in 'being truthful to the ethical requirement of assessing interventions through SSC's own logics'[351], there is more to be done in terms of operationalising horizontality in the evaluation design and methodologies, including through co-constructing evaluation criteria and indicators with the other Southern partner.[352] When it comes to assessments, South-South mutual accountability remains so far more a discourse than an evaluation practice.

SSC evaluation 'politics in time'

How to understand the growing experimentation with SSC evaluations that took place in Brazil in the 2010s, at a time Brazilian SSC was losing political and material support within the *Esplanada*? Such rather unlikely moment, I argue, has simultaneously enabled and constrained the potentialities of Brazilian experimentation with evaluation.

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[348] A similar concern was reported, by one SSC expert, to be emerging in China, and particularly within CIDCA, as the new agency navigates the challenges of consolidating its work while the country enhances its cooperation with the UN system (INT-BR-43).
[349] INT-BR-37; INT-BR-41.
[350] INT-BR-41. See ASUL (2020) for a discussion of the marginalisation of national implementing agencies in the context of the Brazil-UNICEF partnership.
[351] INT-BR-72.
[352] INT-BR-10; INT-BR-72; INT-BR-55.

On the one hand, experimentation happened despite the deep instability that characterised Brazilian SSC in the period. Accountability reforms, including experimenting with SSC evaluations, were actually fostered during this period *because* several national cooperating institutions decided to use publicity and visibility to sustain what they believed to be well-deserving initiatives or at least to create institutional memory in case of loss of support in their own ministries or in the *Esplanada*.[353] The 'retreat moment', as commonly characterised (e.g. Suyama, Waisbich and Leite 2016; D. Marcondes and Mawdsley 2017; Abdenur 2018), also made some programmers less busy implementing SSC initiatives and thus capable to invest time in knowledge activities.[354] On the other hand, political-economic turbulences pushed evaluation further away from the priorities of certain institutions. Despite being major contributors to Brazil's global policy sharing and despite the importance evidence-based policymaking had in their policy work domestically, institutions like the former MDS were already under pressure in the domestic arena. As such, their international teams were trying to focus on finding additional resources to carry on SSC exchanges rather than evaluating them.[355]

Although most Brazilian technical cooperation initiatives remained financially modest and lacked specific funding for M&E (Milani 2017),[356] a number of landmark evaluations were conducted because they became politically important for SSC immediate constituencies: ABC, internal champions within SSC bureaucracies, UN agencies working on SSC in Brazil and experts. In order to operationalise them, ABC set aside some funds, even while facing successive budget cuts. Brazilian external evaluators were willing to work for lower fees and adjust their methodologies hoping to show that evaluating SSC 'from the South' was possible.[357] Both the government and non-state knowledge actors also fundraised with 'traditional' development actors, like the UK, Germany or Oxfam, who wanted to support enhancing the 'knowledge dimensions' of Brazilian SSC.

Plurality remains, nonetheless, the defining feature of this landscape. Largely shaped by the broader political context, this first cycle of SSC evaluations is seen as having promoted 'only the first loop not a learning cycle yet', as framed by one interviewee.[358] More importantly, perhaps, modest reforms reflect the multiple

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[353] INT-BR-41.

[354] INT-BR-3; INT-BR-72; INT-BR-41; INT-BR-10.

[355] In health, this work has been carried out by Fiocruz and the Science and Technology Department. In education, policy-relevant data was produced by the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research "Anísio Teixeira" (INEP). In social policy, the institution in charge of this kind of work was the information management unit (SAGI) within the former MDS. Crosscutting different sectors and a key player in the Brazilian policy-data ecosystem there is also IPEA. Interviewees attributed the consolidation of a results-based-management culture to the technical cooperation and capacity building projects Brazil has received from traditional donors and international organisations, since the 1980s, as well as Brazilian participation in international UN conferences and efforts with MDGs that strengthened Brazilian evidence production (INT-BR-44; INT-BR-68; INT-BR-58; NT-BR-41; INT-BR-34).

[356] INT-BR-10; INT-BR-6.

[357] INT-BR-59; INT-BR-72.

[358] INT-BR-10.

crises that not only weakened many SSC institutional structures in the period but also led to evaluations generating responses to policy, managerial and diplomatic problems that eventually were no longer there.

Uneven South-South cooperation audit dynamics

The will to measure Brazilian SSC contrasts with the relatively low importance auditing Brazilian SSC—excepting BNDES operations—gained in the last decade. This section depicts this landscape and analyses the cases of auditing technical cooperation and BNDES international operations as illustrative of existing uneven audit dynamics.

Auditing the entire gamut of Brazilian SSC did not become a public problem to be acted upon. Other than BNDES Exim Bank scheme, mismanagement and corruption in Brazilian SSC attracted little public attention, including in the media or in legislative debates (Waisbich 2019). This contrasts with the importance corruption historically had in framing national 'aid debates' in countries like the UK (Yanguas 2018a), and the central role corruption scandals played in public imaginaries in Brazil during the same period due to *Lava Jato* (Senters, Weitz-Shapiro and Winters 2018). As put by one staffer from a UN agency in-country: 'In Brazil, where the corruption issue has become so ubiquitous in the current days, one could imagine that, in theory, this would have come up. But it did not'.[359] This also contrasts with the growing presence of corruption concerns in public and expert debates in countries like South Africa (in the context of its African Renaissance Fund) and India (regarding the LOCs scheme) (Mawdsley 2014b; van der Westhuizen 2017; Waisbich 2019; also Chapter 6).[360] Yet because BNDES international operations were not officially and unequivocally framed as 'development cooperation' (see Chapter 4), the hyper public visibility of 'financial accountability deficits' in the case of BNDES international operations did not necessarily contribute to raising domestic audience pressure for auditing the entire Brazilian SSC portfolio.

SSC also remained largely 'under-the-radar' of the Brazilian internal and external control institutions, despite the expansion in the total flows invested by Brazil since the early 2000s. This is not to say that there is no audit system in place. The internal Federal Office of the Comptroller General (CGU)[361] has its own procedures to audit MRE and ABC activities. These can be subjected to the external control of the Federal Court of Accounts (TCU), a central institution in the broader legislative budgetary oversight, in case of

[359] INT-BR-17.

[360] INT-OSS-15; INT-OSS-14.

[361] In line with Brazilian Federal Constitution (art. 70), while the TCU, linked to the Brazilian Congress, works as an accounting court and an external control for the Federal Executive, CGU is an internal control and the agency in charge of policies for promoting transparency and fighting corruption within the federal executive. CGU is also in charge of promoting the open government agenda at the federal level and is credited to have promoted organisational learning in Brazilian federal agencies (Olivieri et al. 2013).

need.[362] UNDP and other UN agencies also have their own procedures to financially account for all projects with Brazil. This extra UN-layer is explained by Brazil's long-running operational agreement with the UN to enable direct procurement, contracting and donating overseas (Cabral and Weinstock 2010; Leite et al. 2014; Milani 2017).[363]

For both TCU and CGU, auditing international cooperation—including auditing UNDP umbrella-projects and other projects with other multilateral and bilateral donors, ABC operations, and MRE's diplomatic missions—meant controlling conformity and legality of expenditures.[364] Against the existing standards, auditors have not encountered major 'audit issues' with Brazilian SSC and felt no technical need or political pressure to treat SSC holistically in all its modalities or as a crosscutting policy issue.[365] SSC financial accountability was not yet a problem to be acted upon. When inquired why, my interlocutors' unison response was: 'lack of materiality'. This audit-risk jargon means that public resources invested in SSC remain below a threshold that would require more tailored attention from audit bodies beyond the existing procedures. For TCU, only BNDES international operations has been object of Congressional audit proceedings.[366] While for CGU, most of its encounters with SSC activities has occurred through ordinary reviewing of ABC and MRE operations and of the technical cooperation projects with international organisations (both 'received' and 'provided').[367]This reduced concern is not inconsistent with the fact that few foreign policy issues become audit issues.[368]

Hence, unlike in certain DAC members, like Denmark, where national auditors *choose* aid as an audit object because it is seen as politically important (Jensen and Winthereik 2013). In Brazil, development cooperation has not reached the 'materiality' (money-wise) to become politically important to the audit system. As a

[362] TCU has in the past to rule on ABC-related cases, but those were mostly related to 'received cooperation' when public agencies celebrated technical cooperation contracts with UN bodies to circumvent legal obligations in Brazil (including related to hiring and procurement). See Labour Prosecution Service Non-Prosecution Agreement (*Termo de Ajustamento de Conduta*) 1.044/2001 and TCU Decision (*acórdão*) 1339/2009.

[363] The lack of a specific legislation for international development cooperation hinders the execution of Brazilian SSC by limiting public agencies' international payments, hiring, donations, among others. Legal obstacles are hence operational obstacles for Brazilian SSC. The umbrella partnership with UNDP, often referred as a 'triangulation of resources', through which the Brazilian government transfer money to UNDP so the UN agency can perform those functions mentioned above, makes Brazilian cooperation logistically possible. Brazilian SSC uses UNDP systems (procurement, financial accountability) but also using offices and thus reducing administrative costs for Brazilian cooperation, it reduces indirect costs of having offices in other countries and thus makes Brazilian cooperation 'cost-effective' (INT-BR-17; INT-BR-49).

[364] Auditing procedures abide by Federal Law 8666 on public tendering and contracting, see http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l8666cons.htm (last access: 19/08/2020).

[365] INT-BR-13; INT-BR-15; INT-BR-17; INT-BR-49; INT-BR-67; INT-BR-69; INT-BR-71.

[366] INT-BR-67; INT-BR-69; INT-BR-71. In 2020, TCU still had at least seven proceedings under exam on BNDES loans to export engineering services (Camarotto 2020).

[367] INT-BR-15; INT-BR-4.

[368] A notable exception, however, is the cost-benefits analysis recently done by TCU on the opening of new diplomatic representations during under the PT era (Pinto 2020). TCU proceedings on the new diplomatic missions in Africa reflect the increased politicisation of Brazilian foreign policy (Waisbich 2020b), with the opposition raising cost-efficiency arguments to claim that the new diplomatic missions were not 'useful' or 'cost-effective' (P. C. Mello and Nublat 2016; SAE 2017).

consequence, the financial accountability landscape remained fragmented and characterised by diverse audit dynamics, as I will show with the cases of technical cooperation and BNDES operations.

Audit fragments

The workings of CGU provide insights into the 'materiality' issue and its implications for Brazilian uneven SSC financial accountability dynamics. As mentioned, the federal comptroller office does not examine SSC as a policy realm or as an audit issue *per se*. CGU sees the issue through the logic of controlling what is conceived in Brazil as 'international technical cooperation', which initially meant 'received' cooperation initiatives but nowadays encompasses both 'received' and 'provided' initiatives.[369] Currently, there are multiple divisions within CGU auditing fragments of the Brazilian 'SSC compact'. The main two dealing with South-South technical cooperation are: CGU's External Resources Division (located in its headquarters) and MRE's internal control system (named CISET).[370] While the External Resources Division audits technical cooperation contracts between Brazil and external entities, CISET audits MRE spending, including ABC's budget. Other development-related engagements (i.e., refugee support, contributions to UN peace operations or export credit operations) are audited by other divisions within CGU.[371] Auditing Brazilian SSC is, therefore, where CGU's fragmented audit approach meets Brazilian SSC fragmentation. As I was told by one auditor: 'The truth is that I find difficult to grasp the full universe. I just cannot. Not even ABC is fully aware of everything'.[372] This is not to say that SSC spending is unchecked. Rather, and similar to the 'lost and found' dynamics in the national budget described previously, it means that SSC expenditures are not seen and accounted for by the state as *SSC-related* expenditures but rather as other things: 'external resources', 'international actions', 'technical cooperation', etc.

CGU does not audit the totality of Brazilian provided technical cooperation either. Its control operates on the basis of sampling through a set of criteria such as expenses' social impact, value/materiality or risk due to decentralised service provision. Currently, neither inflows nor outflows of technical cooperation are considered risky or materially relevant. 'Auditing ABC would be too much work for too little money involved', argued a Brazilian ambassador.[373] From a project perspective, considering Brazil's outsourcing of its South-South technical cooperation contracts to international organisations, CGU audits contracts mostly when requested by the other party (either by an UN agency or a bilateral donor), based on the

[369] CGU ruled on issues such as reducing overheads to international organisations in technical cooperation contracts and limiting the use of technical cooperation with international organisations to internal hiring for the Federal Administration (INT-BR-13).
[370] A few Brazilian bodies (Presidency, Defence and MRE) have their own internal control structures (named CISET, which stands for *Secretaria de Controle Interno,* in Portuguese) separated from the general federal internal auditing system (*Secretaria Federal de Controle Interno,* in Portuguese), under CGU.
[371] This is done according to the public institution in charge of these modalities. For instance, the Ministry of Justice for refugees' support; the Ministry of Defence for peace operations; and BNDES for the Exim Bank operations.
[372] INT-BR-15.
[373] INT-BR-49.

sampling criteria coming from them.[374] Between 2008 and 2019, the number of provided and received technical cooperation projects audited by CGU went from approximately 40 to 21.[375] Numbers were higher in the past because execution was higher during the 'golden years' of Brazilian cooperation.[376]

There are currently no procedures for CGU to audit SSC projects on the ground. Absence of auditing *in loco* relates to the perceived low-levels of risk of technical cooperation initiatives but also to CGU's limiting its work to controlling the conformity and legality of expenditures. There is growing interest but very little capacity within CGU to go beyond what is reported by bureaucrats as activities and outputs as to audit 'efficiency' and/or 'value-for-money'.[377] 'Results' or 'finality' auditing, as they are referred in Brazil, became in 2017 the standard for CGU.[378] Yet CGU's External Division has yet to fully embrace this new and still grey area, currently expanding across the world (Peters 2002; also Chapter 3). As put by one auditor: 'We have to try. At least from a "contribution analysis" point of view and maybe in the future go for "cost-benefit analysis"'.[379] Moreover, so far CGU has not been part of the larger group of Brazilian institutions debating SSC measurement and has exchanged very little with ABC on this matter.[380]

At the same time, audit cultures are very present on the ground, at a project-level. In a recent study, Moreira (2020), analysed an incident under the *C-4+Togo* cotton project where cost-sharing responsibilities for building a fence in the project site became an 'audit imbroglio' (due to the non-conformity of the paperwork sent by ABC to Brasília), which compromised the project flow in Benin. Alongside impasses, my findings indicate other audit dynamics, including ABC's political-diplomatic use of audit procedures to negotiate South-South partnerships and the strategies employed by Brazilian frontline SSC practitioners (*cooperantes*)[381] to negotiate audit rules. The next paragraphs unpack these dynamics through three short vignettes based on first-hand stories from my research participants.[382]

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[374] UNDP, for instance, includes projects of a minimum value of 450 thousand USD or 600 thousand USD executed annually, depending on how it assesses Brazil' corruption risk for that particular year. Brazil normally oscillates between high and medium-high risk. Every project has to be audit at least once during its life-time, once having achieved a minimum of 300 thousand USD of execution. (INT-BR-15; INT-BR-49).

[375] INT-BR-15.

[376] In 2019, received cooperation contracts were the majority and CGU's External Division was only auditing three contracts related to provided cooperation, including the contract with the Brazilian Cotton Institute (*Instituto Brasileiro do Algodão* - IBA, in Portuguese), under which cotton-related projects are developed. The Institute was created in 2007 after Brazil won a WTO dispute over cotton subsidies by the US. Brazil decided to reinvest 10% of the resources in technical cooperation with low-income cotton producers (ASUL/PLAN 2015; Moreira 2020). CISET had another three UNDP contracts to audit, including one related to cotton and another to police training and capacity building. (INT-BR-15; INT-BR-24).

[377] INT-BR-24; INT-BR-49.

[378] See https://www.gov.br/cgu/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2019/03/cgu-publica-novo-padrao-de-relatorios-de-auditoria (last access: 29/07/2020).

[379] INT-BR-15.

[380] Namely ABC, MRE, IPEA, IBGE and many of the individual focal points within implementing agencies that have joined Cobradi efforts.

[381] *Cooperantes* are Brazilian experts, career or appointed civil servants, that also work implementing South-South technical cooperation on the ground.

[382] All names used are pseudonyms and the projects described in an approximate way, as to protect the anonymity of participants.

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Navigating audit rules (1). Circa 2010. Maria, who works for a Brazilian line-ministry, is organising a large event for school children with her peers in a West African country. As a frontline *cooperante* she has to navigate the many legal restrictions faced by her Ministry to implement projects abroad and decides to transfer 'suitcases of money' via the financial services company Western Union to local partners in the capital for the logistics of the event. She feels embarrassed for having to highlight that she *needed* everyone to bring receipts for *every single* expense. She is also anxious as her team, back in Brasília, was distrustful of the move and under pressure to comply with strict institutional auditing guidelines. As the event finished, her local counterparts brought her hundreds of little paper receipts, signed by the pupils that attended the event, and even small change in coins: she was so disconcertedly moved that she cried.[383]

Navigating audit rules (2). Circa 2016. João, an expert at ABC drives towards one project site, in a rural area of a country in the Sahel region, hundreds of miles away from the capital. He suddenly realises he will need to replace the tyres of his car and find himself having to ask for a paper receipt in order to comply with Brazilian official auditing requirements. The repairman had no other paper than a brown-bag where he kept his bread, on which he writes down the service and the cost. Unsure of whether CGU would accept *this kind* of receipt, João is now even more conceived that micro-financial auditing of Brazilian SSC was counter-productive and that CGU auditors had to see projects in action through their own eyes.[384]

Learning audit missions. Circa 2018. Felipe is an auditor sent to a country in Sub-Saharan Africa to visit Brazilian SSC projects and meet national counterparts *in loco*. His visit integrates a new initiative, by ABC, to invite auditors to 'learning field-site missions' to better understand SSC implementation on the ground.[385] Missions are a two-fold strategy for ABC. First, to show auditors the difficulties of executing abroad and sensitise auditors 'to the reality of financially executing in Africa'.[386] Second, to show partner governments that it is 'hard' for ABC to secure public funds for cooperation. Felipe meets a state minister and tells him:

> *Listen, I am an auditor and I know we do not have endless resources. They can actually decrease. This is why is important for you to help us. To help Brazil helping you. You must prepare yourselves better to receive this structure* [referring to a training centre] *and give visibility to Brazil as well. Treat us better. Because our resources are hard-earned.*[387]

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[383] INT-BR-34.
[384] INT-BR-49; INT-BR-24.
[385] INT-BR-24; INT-BR-49; INT-BR-15; INT-BR-64.
[386] INT-BR-24.
[387] INT-BR-24; INT-BR-49.

The imbroglios, missions and the 'working around' by *cooperantes* on the ground[388] illustrate certain types of audit pressures on Brazilian SSC practitioners as well as ongoing negotiations to keep SSC running. On the one hand, the lack of adequate legal framework for SSC creates audit hurdles at the implementation level for line-ministries operationalising their activities without the intermediation of an UN agency (as in the first vignette). It also creates the need for ABC to convince diplomats heading Brazilian foreign missions to sign-off costs related to technical projects (sometimes risking personal liability) and to convince audit bodies in Brasília to accept alternative forms of project cost reporting (as in the second vignette).[389]

On the other hand, the third vignette anecdotally illustrates of a particular use of audit to help convincing partners, in times of austerity, of the value of Brazilian SSC, whereby auditors become frontline practitioners, negotiating project implementation on the ground. Audit missions to partner countries also indicate what could be a first step in an organisational 'learning journey' for both CGU and ABC on controlling this type of public policy (Olivieri et al. 2013) to make auditors more aware of the particularities of SSC projects and make omnipresent audit procedures more adapted to the realities of Brazilian SSC. Together the vignettes illustrate SSC audit landscapes in-the-making and the multiple negotiations between 'SSC bureaucracies' and audit bureaucracies and between Brazilian *cooperantes* and their counterparts on the ground. This growing but fragmented approach to auditing SSC is unlikely to change in the next years unless development cooperation flows increase dramatically and become a 'risky' or 'thematically important issue-area' for the Brazilian audit system to act upon.[390]

The accountability problem in BNDES international operations

Unlike most of Brazil's SSC, BNDES international operations have materiality and thus political visibility in the eyes of control systems and the public. Between 2007 and 2015, BNDES Exim Bank scheme, an export credit facility, funded 542 projects and lent approximately 12 billion USD to Brazilian civil engineering multinationals like Odebrecht, OAS, Andrade Gutierrez and Queiroz Galvão for the engineering services they offered to infrastructure projects in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa (Garcia and Kato 2020). This expanded role generated different sorts of public and expert accountability debates.

The case of BNDES depicts combined multiple accountability regimes—political, legal, managerial and social—pushing for transparency and compliance reforms. Facing intense scrutiny during the PT era by the political opposition and Brazilian civil society (Lazzarini et al. 2015; Sierra and Hochstetler 2017; Cruz 2020), BNDES has developed a more pro-active communication and public relations strategy.[391] In 2008,

[388] For an application of the concept of 'working around' or 'hacking strategies' in the context of sustainability projects, see Savaget (2019).
[389] INT-BR-64.
[390] INT-BR-15; INT-BR-13.
[391] INT-BR-23.

BNDES put in place press releases,[392] many of which on what the bank called its 'international operations'. Some aimed at explaining the Exim scheme, others at clarifying details or the status of specific projects. Others still were direct responses to articles in the press. Releases repeatedly challenged what BNDES called 'misrepresentations/misconceptions', 'omissions' and/or 'inferring' by the media, emphasising instead the 'technical nature' of BNDES funding decisions and the importance of the scheme to 'generate jobs and revenue in Brazil' (BNDES 2015).[393] In the aftermath of *Lava Jato*, many releases also clarified the procedures adopted by the bank to prevent 'exporting corruption' through its export credit scheme.

External pressure on BNDES and pushes for transparency reforms kept coming from numerous Brazilian and international actors. In 2015, two different cases on transparency reached the Supreme Court, which then clarified the limits of BNDES use of 'bank secrecy' provisions under the Brazil's Access to Information Law, prompting the bank to start releasing more information publicly.[394] Later, and as a response to the broader *Lava Jato* context, BNDES updated its website and launched a *Transparency Portal,* which included explanations on international operations among other alleged 'controversial issues'.[395] The Portal was conceived as a communication tool for the bank to navigate what many insiders qualified as an increasingly 'polluted' public debate,[396] in particular on its international operations, and a 'hostile' and 'overly politicised environment'[397]. These transparency reforms also responded to pressure from CSOs, which managed to consolidate a short-lived *BNDES-Civil Society Dialogue Forum* (2014-2016), in which transparency was a major concern (Sierra and Hochstetler 2017; Conectas 2018a; also Chapter 7).[398] Around the same time, BNDES and UNDP signed an agreement to strengthen BNDES Amazonia Fund operations and to increase BNDES overall transparency and synergies with Agenda 2030, including through SSC (ONU Brasil 2015).[399]

Although transparency is often portraited as an 'easy-pick' or 'low-hanging fruit'[400] for BNDES among the many accountability issues on the table, in the mid-2010s, the bank also created a Social Responsibility Policy, multi-annual Sustainability Plans, and an Institutional Relations Department to improve relations

[392] *Comunicados*, in Portuguese. All releases are available online at https://www.bndes.gov.br/wps/portal/site/home/imprensa/noticias (last access: 29/07/2020)
[393] For a sociological discussion on the opposition between the technical and the political in the discourses of BNDES bureaucratic elite, see Klüger (2015).
[394] The Supreme Court case followed a law-case by the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* and a requirement by the TCU.
[395] *BNDES Transparência*, in Portuguese, available at https://www.bndes.gov.br/wps/portal/site/home/transparencia/politica-de-transparencia-e-divulgacao/Guia-de-Praticas-de-Transparencia-do-Sistema-BNDES (last access: 29/07/2020).
[396] INT-BR-11; INT-BR-25; INT-BR-38; INT-BR-56; INT-BR-70.
[397] INT-BR-45.
[398] INT-BR-51; INT-BR-12; INT-BR-1.
[399] BNDES is the manager of the Amazon Fund (Fundo Amazônia), created in 2008 to raise donations earmarked for non-refundable investments in fighting deforestation in addition to the conservation and sustainable use of its natural and biodiversity resources. Since 2019, under Bolsonaro, the Fund has stopped working and no new project was approved. Brazilian Supreme Court is currently judging a petition by opposition parties against the federal government for omission (ISA 2020). This is the first climate change-related litigation that reaches the Brazilian Supreme Court (Setzer 2020).
[400] INT-BR-12; INT-BR-51.

with its diverse set of stakeholders. Responding to *Lava Jato*, BNDES also enhanced its compliance mechanisms.[401] Already in 2015, BNDES suspended export credit contracts with companies—at that time only allegedly—involved in corruption and issued new and more stringent compliance rules to resume them. BNDES also established a formal partnership with TCU to improve its internal and external transparency and accountability practices. As part of the partnership, both institutions co-hosted, in 2018, a public hearing to present an enhanced version of the *Transparency Portal.*[402] This new version of the Portal included interactive open-data tools on 'key issues to the public', including on export operations.[403] By the time the new Portal was launched, BNDES internationalisation was already non-existent (Conectas 2018a; Hochstetler and Inoue 2019)[404] but the debates around transparency and accountability were still alive in the public sphere, and very much connected to *Lava Jato*.

As the *Lava Jato* operation evolved not only have BNDES support to infrastructure building abroad became associated, in public imagination, with the corruption scandals under investigation but also other oversight bodies have started to act upon it. BNDES international operations from 2003-2015 were object of three legislative investigations that ran parallel to the judicial anti-corruption operation. While the first two have not resulted in concrete charges, the third parliamentary inquire, completed in October 2019, recommended a judicial inquiry on former BNDES staff, representatives of the private sector and former PT government officials.[405] The latter refuted the charges claiming they constituted an instrument for 'criminalising BNDES activities' in order to privatise the bank (Poder360 2019). Former and current BNDES political and career staff interviewed expressed a somehow similar frustration with a perceived 'excessive politicisation' of the corruption issue, under *Lava Jato*, and its negative consequences on BNDES ability to carry its work, as illustrated in the two quotes below:[406]

> *Having the possibility to explain our work to the society was important. But the debate was initiated by others and this was bad. We had no time to react. BNDES export promotion is justifiable, but it became polluted. We did*

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[401] As a precautionary measure, already in 2015, BNDES suspended Exim Bank scheme contracts with companies—at that time only allegedly—involved in corruption and has only resume a few of them after assuring the companies signed to the more stringent compliance in place (INT-BR-13; INT-BR-45; INT-BR-11; INT-BR-25; INT-BR-38; INT-BR-56; INT-BR-70).

[402] As part of my fieldwork in Brazil I attended the public hearing, hosted at BNDES headquarters in Rio de Janeiro, in August 2018. For an official account from BNDES on the hearing see: https://www.bndes.gov.br/wps/portal/site/home/transparencia/audiencia-transparencia (last access: 15/12/2020).

[403] BNDES account on the partnership and its results so far can be seen at https://www.bndes.gov.br/wps/portal/site/home/transparencia/iniciativas (last access: 26/10/2020).

[404] Already by 2016 little had left from BNDES internationalisation: international offices were shut, and the Exim Bank scheme was *de facto* halted out of what BNDES staffer called 'a perfect storm' combining the partial or full suspension of international contracts due to *Lava Jato* and the US Department of Justice pressures and a decrease in oil and commodity prices in partner countries (such as Venezuela and Mozambique) making them less willing to move forward with projects. (INT-BR-45; INT-BR-11; INT-BR-25; INT-BR-38; INT-BR-56; INT-BR-70; INT-BR-23).

[405] In Portuguese, a *Comissão Parlamentar de Inquérito* – CPI. This particular inquiry on BNDES became informally known as *'CPI do BNDES'*. See https://www2.camara.leg.br/atividade-legislativa/comissoes/comissoes-temporarias/parlamentar-de-inquerito/56a-legislatura/cpi-praticas-ilicitas-no-ambito-do-bndes (last access: 28/11/2020).

[406] INT-BR-45; INT-BR-11; INT-BR-25; INT-BR-38; INT-BR-56; INT-BR-70.

not initiate this debate and so there were many myths and misconstructions. Society had no idea about the scheme and now is completely biased.[407]

Politicisation erodes the possibility of a consequential policy dialogue. It hinders discussions on strategies. Neither the media nor Congress wanted to debate whether we should focus or diversify our investments geographically (…) I can no longer talk about these things in public debates because there is a 'demonisation' of Brazilian foreign policy and its investments (…) The internationalisation is a public policy and a governmental strategy: an internal and external industrial development policy. We became a textbook case for politicisation and yet we still lack the set of institutions to properly compete internationally.[408]

Presently, there are neither signs that the Federal Prosecution Office (MPF) will open an anti-corruption dossier on BNDES nor that the thesis that BNDES was 'exporting corruption' will became the line of argument of *Lava Jato* task-force in the near future.[409] While the bribery charges against multinationals like Odebrecht in Peru and Mexico indicate that corruption was indeed transnational, the direct involvement of BNDES remains unproven (Conectas 2018a; Simon 2019). TCU ministers, however, have yet to give their final verdict on the issue of misuse in BNDES export credit loans to engineering companies between 2006-2012 (Camarotto 2020).

While unclear from a judicial and audit perspective, the association of BNDES international operations with highly visible 'horizontal corruption' scandals (A. Gupta 2017)[410] under scrutiny has already generated important effects. On the one hand, it has, since 2015, fostered transparency, accountability, and compliance reforms within BNDES.[411] On the other, the political charges on a potential BNDES-corruption nexus remained in the public sphere and the bank's international footprint became indissociable from discourses of accountability deficits and corruption. In 2018, the then candidate Jair Bolsonaro promised, if elected, 'to solve the BNDES black box problem created under the PT rule' and 'audit all BNDES contracts' (J. R. Castro 2019; Cruz 2020). This time however, BNDES 'transparency problem' found little echo among other social actors. Some even criticised Bolsonaro's obsession with the so-called 'BNDES black box' (A. Fernandes 2020; Bolle 2019). The renewed electoral salience of the topic illustrates, nonetheless, how discourses of accountability fitted the larger political and policy disputes over Brazil's developmental state and over the role foreign policy and SSC played in it (Waisbich 2020b).

[407] INT-BR-11; INT-BR-25; INT-BR-38; INT-BR-56; INT-BR-70.

[408] INT-BR-45.

[409] INT-BR-13.

[410] According to Gupta, horizontal corruption is the one in which politicians and government officers extract rents from elites in business and commercial sectors. Moreover, when horizontal corruption is unveiled in India is often because of elite in-fighting, or 'structural antagonism among the elite' and 'competition between fractions of capital', accusing each other of state capture.

[411] INT-BR-11; INT-BR-25; INT-BR-38; INT-BR-56; INT-BR-70; INT-BR-12; INT-BR-13.

Conclusion

This chapter examined how SSC accountability has been problematised and negotiated inside Brazil in recent years. The panorama depicted is one where domestic SSC accountability politics were shaped by the particular consolidation dynamics of development cooperation as a policy and political field in the country. In Brazil, SSC-specific domestic accountability dynamics are deeply interwoven with growing political, managerial and social pressures on foreign policy actors to justify their policy options and outcomes due to mounting political polarisation and ever-expanding evaluation and audit cultures across the state. SSC accountability dynamics are also intimately related to the plural and shifting views on Brazilian international 'Southern' identity and its role as a development cooperation 'provider'.

Looking at 'accountability politics in time', this chapter discussed how broader domestic dynamics affected the formation of 'meta-arenas of conflict' over SSC accountability and over SSC as a policy realm, in tandem with internal questioning of SSC as a strategic foreign policy agenda and tool for the Presidency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and/or specialised public institutions that acted as SSC implementing agencies during the 2010s. Political, inter-/intra-bureaucratic and social questioning were both about the broad policy option to engage in South-South exchanges and on its financial implications, particularly as political and economic turmoil took over the country and Brazil entered an austerity phase. Noisy politicisation and the multidimensional effects of the *Lava Jato* anti-corruption operation further complicated the prospects of agreeing on a common narrative for why SSC mattered to Brazil and why was important to invest state resources in international development. Absence of agreement on the value of SSC has fuelled political accountability debates and prolonged Brazilian SSC consolidation phase throughout the decade, generating uncertainty and friction not only over its 'effectiveness' but rather over its *raison d'être.*

Despite the macro-political instability, but also in response to it, several 'SSC bureaucracies', civil society and UN agencies have decided to invest in experimenting with a range of accountability tools. Transparency, quantification and evaluation artefacts were mobilised as means to support Brazil's differentiation efforts as a 'Southern partner', to learn and improve cooperation practices, and to keep building this policy field internally, if not safeguard it. While the Brazilian government did not face strong internal and external *pressure* to produce 'ritual aid evaluations' (Rottenburg 2009, 71) or to systematically quantify and report on flows, combined external and internal *incentives* to experiment with measuring have emerged within the Brazilian 'SSC ecosystem' (ABC, Embrapa, IPEA and the small but active group of development experts). These actors and institutions have acted, often in interaction with the global development apparatus, as 'SSC champions' and as 'accountability reformers'.

Existing SSC quantification, reporting and evaluation dynamics within Brazil—and the multiple tensions they generate—highlight the complexities of consolidating SSC measurement practices in a policy field that

was under broader political questioning and where showcasing success was at the same important and risky. Showcasing success was not only about proving generosity or seeking status within 'a club of grown-ups' but also a survival strategy for domestic 'SSC bureaucracies' that needed recognition and external support to remain active and counter the noise that came after particular crises, be that *Lava Jato* or ProSavana. In the Brazilian version of the 'SSC measurement paradox', institutions and practitioners had to navigate between the need to show results to sustain their engagements, and expand internal constituencies, and the fear that increased visibility could raise political and/or financial questioning on the purposes of doing development abroad.

As for audit dynamics, this chapter shows how the *materiality* and *visibility* of public resources spent in development cooperation-related initiatives shaped the ways auditing SSC was constituted, or not, as a problem in the eyes of the public, the legislative branch and audit experts. While in the case of BNDES auditing SSC reflected a potential misuse problem to be acted upon, technical cooperation remained very much unimportant. Still on audit dynamics, I have suggested that the absence of a formal development cooperation policy in Brazil explains the fragmented way existing internal and external control systems see and deal with SSC as a (non)audit issue and it they remained subjected to the financial accountability logics coming from UN agencies and other 'traditional' donors Brazil relies on to operationalise its cooperation.

Permeating these foreign policy, measurement and audit dynamics, bureaucratic politics stands out as an important element in the Brazilian landscape. As a multifaceted foreign policy instrument, SSC serves different national public agencies in their domestic and international policy and institutional battles and is hence subject to multi-layered accountability systems and competing expectations. Bureaucratic politics also matters because the Brazilian state is not uniform and different bodies have different internal evaluation cultures, different civil society participation dynamics, and different political dynamics and ideologies.[412] This variation can explain why the Ministry of Health and the former CGFome have sought to create tools to publicise their SSC engagements, with or without ABC. It also helps situating how 'SSC bureaucracies' have unevenly responded to IPEA data appeals for the *Cobradi* quantification project, making *Cobradi* reliant on the good will of each institution to be able to count and report Brazilian development cooperation efforts.[413]

[412] This is important because Brazilian coalition presidentialism makes ministries an object of political bargain withing the ruling coalition. For a comprehensive view on Brazilian coalition system, see Limongi and Figueiredo (1998). Alden and Brummer (2019) suggest that coalition politics, a feature of Indian landscape since the 1980s, is also an important element in Indian foreign policy analysis.

[413] In the case of Brazilian SSC, bureaucratic politics is also an important lens to understanding why actors like the former Ministry of Agrarian Development and Embrapa have more actively participated in SSC exchanges during the PT era sharing their policies and expertise than the Ministry of Agriculture. Since 2019, the Ministry of Agricultural Development was integrated as a secretary within the Ministry of Agriculture, in an institutional downgrading and a sign of de-priorisation of the small-farming agenda, watering the previous duality in Brazilian SSC agriculture cooperation that tried to conciliate sharing agrobusiness and small-farming experiences (Pierri 2013; Cabral 2016), in benefit of the latter.

Going back to the relation between accountability politics and SSC institutionalisation dynamics, this chapter shows that SSC consolidation phase in Brazil has been inseparable from the politicisation of SSC in the country and thus marked by numerous disputes and negotiations around SSC and around whether and how to justify it to competing domestic constituencies. I have also made the case for looking at SSC consolidation reforms and accountability reforms as two processes closely entangled. In the case of technical cooperation, consolidation reforms have created opportunities for different domestic constituencies to negotiate incremental accountability reforms within ABC or in public institutions implementing SSC initiatives and, through that, to dispute SSC policy priorities. The dynamic at BNDES was the other way-round, with multidimensional accountability dynamics generating a series of incremental institutional reforms.

It became evident, moreover, that the relationship between these two processes is far from straightforward. Lacking consistent political support at the Presidency-level since 2010, incremental reforms have contributed only marginally to establish a coherent narrative for SSC and a set of policy spaces for domestic stakeholders to formally negotiate its purposes, practices and results. The more comprehensive set of reforms—found in the case of BNDES—owns a lot to the combined political, legal and social pressure received from different domestic publics, even though most of the new procedures could not be fully tested since BNDES international operations have *de facto* stalled since 2016.[414] Additionally, reforms have not solved all pending SSC institutional bottlenecks. Certainly, the expansion of Brazilian SSC in the 2000s set the conditions for the rise of reformist demands (on narrowly-defined management issues and on broader policymaking dynamics) and for the emergence of accountability tools (Beghin 2014; Westmann 2017; Farias 2018). Yet, amidst a loss of political impetus, reforms left untouched several institutional bottlenecks, including the absence of a legal framework, insufficient human resources and budget and lack of formal arrangements for partnering with the private sector and CSOs (Cabral and Weinstock 2010; Almino and J. B. B. Lima 2017; Milani and Klein 2020).

Ultimately, this kaleidoscopic panorama within Brazil, with present and absent SSC accountability systems and dynamics, challenges simplistic assumptions of 'SSC accountability deficits' or foreign policy 'democratic deficits'. Accountability debates, both public and expert debates, and the unfolding accountability negotiations are above all signs of a policy field in-the-making, evolving in a controversial environment and amid both consolidation and dismantling pressures.

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[414] This includes the pilot for a new socio-environmental safeguard approach to high-risk infrastructure projects based on the revised socio-environmental policy. (INT-BR-11; INT-BR-25; INT-BR-38; INT-BR-56; INT-BR-70).

6. Negotiating South-South cooperation accountability at home: India and China

After examining the domestic SSC accountability politics in Brazil, this chapter offers an account of the domestic landscape in India and China. While less comprehensive (a choice I methodologically justified in Chapter 2), the panorama depicted here provides a basis for comparing and contrasting domestic and *intermestic* processes and for identifying dynamics cutting across large SSC providers. Two questions guide the analysis in this chapter. First, how measurement, a key and contested accountability issue in North-South cooperation and increasingly present in SSC global debates and in Brazil, has been discussed in India and China? Second, what other accountability issues have become politically salient in these countries and why?

The chapter is structured as follows. The first section explores the landscape in India while the second one investigates China. In both cases the analysis brings together the context-specific manifestations of SSC measurement politics and the broader internal political and policy debates around India and China's global roles and identities as development cooperation providers. By doing so, it highlights the interplay between geopolitics, development knowledge politics and state-society relations in shaping domestic SSC accountability dynamics in both countries.

India: when accountability is not quite a problem

Unlike the noisy landscape in Brazil, SSC accountability dynamics inside India have been marked by their low public and political salience, or its 'little politics'.[415] This can come as a surprise in many ways. First, due to the importance accountability discourses and 'measurementalities' have for the numerous Indian state institutions dealing with development programmes (A. Gupta 2012) and the many social accountability mechanisms devised in India since the 1990s in the context of these programmes (Goetz and Jenkins 2001; Blair 2018). Second, due to the multiple forms Indian civil (and political) society[416] have employed accountability discourses, including when contesting, 'from below', state and state-backed private development projects (Roy 2003; Prashant Sharma 2014; Mohanty 2018). Vibrant anti-dam social movements are a widely known example, but others include the social mobilisation leading to the approval of the Right to Information Act (RTI) in the early 2000s and the 2011 anti-corruption movement led by Anna Hazare.

[415] Here I echo the expression used by Macauley (2014) to characterise Brazilian foreign policy landscape before the PT era.

[416] The differentiation between 'civil' and 'political' society in the case of India was first suggested by (Chatterjee 2004). I will come back to this discussion when discussing Indian social pro-accountability mobilisation in Chapter 7.

Third, low domestic salience is even more surprising when contrasted with Indian global diplomatic and para-diplomatic outspoken activism on SSC measurement, discussed in Chapter 4. One could then expect a disputed landscape inside India. But this has not happened. Not only Indian championing of alternative ways to measure SSC has not materialised into politically salient SSC national and subnational measurement disputes or experimentations, but also the ubiquitous 'measurementality' ruling other areas, branches and levels of the Indian state have not yet entered the realm of foreign policy and development cooperation. Why?

Following a 'domestic politics of foreign policy' analytical approach, my response to this puzzle is that SSC accountability (including in its classic management and audit understandings) has only exceptionally (most notably in Indian LOCs) or inconsistently become a problem to Indian domestic publics and to other parts of the Indian state. Indian development cooperation, and accountability in/of Indian development cooperation, were rarely rendered a public problem because Indian foreign policy elites have been largely insulated from the pressures to explain themselves to a range of domestic constituencies, and because Indian SSC portfolio is still invisible, and even unconceivable, in Indian public and state's imaginaries. This has led to the government and the various parts of the SSC bureaucracy not needing to 'walk the talk', an expression I often heard in Indian activists' circles, and experiment practicing SSC accountability at home. Concurrently, external factors, including *Aidland's* socialising pressures and incentives have played a less significant role in India, when compared to Brazil or China. This can be explained by an interplay of strong diplomatic resistance to include accountability issues in the partnerships with 'traditional' donors and the limited penetration external actors have on Indian 'development assistance' system[417] (through triangular cooperation or partnering with knowledge actors and civil society) (Paulo 2018).

Foreign policy debates: the national consensus on 'doing better and doing more'

Understanding the current low salience of domestic problematisations of accountability in Indian development cooperation requires considering the ways foreign policy is made in India and how development cooperation has been perceived as a foreign policy tool among domestic publics, particularly under Narendra Modi's BJP rule (2014-). Scholars posit that, despite the economic liberalisation and the advent of political competition and coalition politics in the 1990s, Indian foreign policy remains a product of relative insulated elites: a limited number of political actors within the MEA, the Prime Minister Office and the National Security Council, bureaucrats within those bodies and some policy advisors, notably former ambassadors (Sullivan de Estrada 2015). Certainly, foreign policy elites' interaction with a small but

[417] Development Assistance has been traditionally the official designation adopted by the Government of India to refer to its development cooperation, including in flagship initiatives such as the Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS). Though the term South-South Cooperation is increasingly more present in official discourses, there is no internal consensus within India on its political appropriateness and/or usefulness, and, so far, SSC has not fully replaced other designations, including 'development assistance' or 'development cooperation'.

growing foreign policy community—comprised of think tanks,[418] academics, CSOs, journalists in major urban centres and, increasingly so, subnational political authorities[419]—has expanded in the last decade. Yet, Indian foreign policy still enjoys a *de facto* pan-partisan realist consensus and overall little questioning on India's quest for greater power status and use of development cooperation to secure reputational, policy and economic goals (Chaturvedi et al. 2014; Mawdsley 2014b; Sullivan de Estrada 2015; Chenoy and Joshi 2016; Ganguly, Hellwig and Thompson 2016; Michael and Baumann 2016).[420] This also means few disputes around the role and workings of key Indian 'SSC bureaucracies', like the Development Partnership Administration (DPA), and other implementing actors (including Indian companies operating abroad).

Scholars equally concur on a general 'public apathy' related to most foreign policy issues (Mawdsley 2014b; Aneja 2015; Ganguly, Hellwig and Thompson 2016).[421] Previous research suggested that development cooperation attracted little attention among the masses and among middle-classes and elites, whose thoughts on India's SSC have ranged between unawareness, indifference and support (Henson 2013; Mawdsley 2014b).[422] Chenoy and Joshi (2016, 110) clearly posited that while embedded in an endorsing 'nationalistic discourse', the topic has not received enough attention in domestic debates. My own findings show that not much has changed. Indian scholars and practitioners interviewed agreed that there is—at least on the surface—wide support for India's role in global development and little questionings from domestic constituencies. Unlike Brazil, calls for halting development assistance on the lines of a (fighting poverty within) 'India first' or questioning the policy and strategic rationale of 'assisting' countries like Afghanistan or Nepal remain marginal.[423] As put by one Indian scholar: 'These things have appeal. No one ever opposed the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC),[424] not even when India was poor. No one opposes SSC'.[425]

Increasing diversity within the still small, mostly Delhi-based, foreign policy community has allowed, nonetheless, for some dissensus to emerge, strongly fuelled by growing geopolitical anxieties over Indian

[418] In the field of foreign policy and development cooperation there is a growing diversity of think tanks, most of them Delhi-based. Some are classic Indian foreign policy think tanks, led by former ambassadors some are India branches of US think tanks like Brookings and Carnegie. Among the national ones, some are liberal (like Observer Research Foundation - ORF), other more left-leaning (Centre for Policy Research - CPR) and others more nationalists (like RIS). On Indian think tanks, see Saran and Mohan (2018).
[419] For a discussion on the role of states in Indian foreign policy, see Asthana and Jacob (2019).
[420] INT-IN-20; INT-IN-16.
[421] Often mentioned exceptions include, excepting Sri Lanka issues in Tamil Nadu or Bangladesh issues for Bengali people or, more broadly, Indian relations with Pakistan, the US and China.
[422] This is not unrelated, to a broader traditional uninterest in or even denigration of the 'soft power' agenda more generally (which includes development cooperation) by Indian foreign policy elites. There are signs of changes in the last years, with the growing interest by the Modi administration in certain aspects of this agenda (particularly with respect to the use of cultural resources to meet foreign policy goals), such as in the so-called `Yoga Diplomacy' (personal communication with Supriya Roychoudhury, 2020).
[423] INT-IN-5; INT-IN-16.
[424] ITEC is a governmental-funded training and capacity building scheme for individuals from Global South countries established in the 1960s. The Program has run ever since despite the fact that India was until the 1990s one of the largest aid recipients in the world.
[425] INT-IN-1.

global identity in the 21st century and growing competition with China (Khilnani et al. 2012). Dissensus has brought to the table specific accountability issues, either driven by concerns with making India a 'responsible global power' (Saran and Mohan 2018; Leveringhaus and Sullivan de Estrada 2018) or, more frequently, by management and 'delivery/implementation' concerns along the lines of 'India could do more' and/or 'could do better'.[426]

According to Mawdsley (2014b), criticism from elites and CSOs, when present, were less about conduct, purpose, effectiveness and/or morality and more about state-led initiatives, focusing on issues of corruption and mismanagement. Additionally, even for the more dissenting voices, moderation or 'shy' and 'friendly criticism' have been the preferred modes of critical engagement (Mawdsley 2014b; Mawdsley and Roychoudhury 2016). Moderation, I find, results from both exogenous and self-imposed appeals to restraint. On the one hand, numerous research participants described instances where the space for critique and critical knowledge production had been limited. Representatives of non-governmental knowledge institutions reported difficulties researching Indian SSC. Instances of both backlash after publications and self-censorship were mentioned.[427] On the other hand, CSOs representatives strongly felt a 'shrinking civic space' under Modi.[428] This includes the supressing and dismantling of participatory spaces, public consultations, and access to information provisions, including in the context of environmental impact assessments (Chandhoke 2018; Jha 2018; Behar 2020).[429] It also includes government pressure on the voluntary sector through legal instruments such as the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) and labelling criticism and dissent as 'anti-national' (also Chapter 7).[430]

The Indian Parliament and the media have been, nonetheless, two important spaces where certain accountability issues, notably related to audit and the overall efficiency of Indian development cooperation emerged, albeit in a limited form. Lok Sabha's Standing Committee on External Affairs, which formally oversees MEA's budget, has since 2015 devoted an entire chapter of its annual reports to India's development engagements, which feature descriptions of some bilateral partnerships and/or projects. Yet, besides formal oversight, the Committee—until 2019 chaired by the opposition Congress Party—has seldom engaged in debates on the performance, quality and/or results of Indian development assistance

[426] The framing of 'could do more' was suggested to me by one interviewee in India (INT-ODP-5). Elsewhere I have analysed Parliamentary debates to show these two particular stances ('do more' and 'do better') towards Indian development cooperation by the country's legislative (Waisbich 2019).

[427] INT-IN-5; INT-IN-18.

[428] INT-IN-14; INT-IN-10; INT-IN-8; INT-IN-19.

[429] For a summary of the debates and criticisms around the proposed changes to the current environmental impact assessment regime in India, see Adhya (2020).

[430] This tendency is seen as having accelerated during the Covid-19 pandemic, with further backlash against critical voices within civil society as well as against INGOs. An example of tighter control has been the 2020 FCRA Amendment that has raised fears among local organisations and forced certain international ones to shut operations in India (Dhoop and Dhoop 2020).

(Chenoy and Joshi 2016; Tharoor 2020).[431] Unlike the more polarised Brazilian legislative, the Indian Parliament remains largely supportive of the expansion of India's development cooperation and showed no signs of challenging the broad establishment agreement on the 'win-win' nature of Indian SSC and the benefits India gets from it. Rather the Committee has called for the expansion MEA's cooperation budget, challenging the gaps between Indian's global ambitions and MEA's budget and the gaps between commitments to the region and actual fund allocations (Mullen and Arora 2016; Lok Sabha 2017; 2018).[432] Furthermore, unlike in South Africa where civil society groups have used parliamentarian oversight in their advocacy with the executive on SSC issues (van der Westhuizen 2017; Waisbich 2019), CSOs in India have found a less receptive environment among national legislators.[433]

As for the media, Modi's South-South diplomacy, particularly his promises to extend loans to neighbouring countries—in an almost obsessive move to counter China (Chenoy and Joshi 2016)—has been an issue frequently reported in the press. Indian LOCs received media attention due to the mutual gains promises of creating jobs in India (e.g., S. Gupta 2015) but also due to allegations of corruption in the selection of Indian firms (e.g., Pranay Sharma 2011; Iyer 2015; Kapoor 2017; D. Mitra 2017). Attention among investigative journalists and CSOs peaked around certain key-moments, such as at time of the third India-Africa Summit in 2015, but was not sustained and few have found the ways to consistently dig into the local workings and impacts of Indian development cooperation on the ground. An exception is the cross-regional coalition BRICS Feminist Watch,[434] strongly led by Indian activists, which monitors India's participation in Southern-led multilateral development banks, like the AIIB and the BRICS-led NDB (BFW 2019; also Chapter 7).[435]

Reluctance to practice measurement

Relatively insulated from the masses and from provocations by the foreign policy/development epistemic and policy communities, SSC measurement dynamics in India have been strongly shaped by governmental (and quasi-governmental) actors' unwillingness to experiment with SSC accountability at home or to develop Indian specific accountability tools. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, at the global level, Indian actors like senior MEA diplomats from the DPA, the Indian missions to the UN in New York or Geneva,

[431] From 2014 to 2019 the Committee was chaired by Shashi Tharoor (Congress party), one of the major opposition voices to Modi's government and also former State Minister of External Affairs. In 2020, the BJP government has decided to end the tradition of the leading opposition to chair the External Affairs Committee, it what was considered by Tharoor himself as blow to democratic accountability on foreign policy issues (The Hindu 2019).

[432] In 2018, the Committee even suggested that the Ministry consider granting the DPA the financial autonomy of a fully-fledged development agency (Lok Sabha 2018).

[433] INT-IN-20; INT-IN-10; INT-OSS-15.

[434] The BRICS Feminist Watch defines itself as an 'alliance comprised of members working in BRICS countries and towards influencing policy cross-regionally as they pertain to BRICS activities. BFW brings the collective strength of feminist analysis and activism to promote gender-responsive inclusive sustainable development and to make visible the linkages between gender justice, environmental and economic justice as critical to sustain people, movements and actions' (BFW 2020).

[435] INT-IN-5; INT-IN-7; INT-IN-20.

and, above all, the MEA-affiliated think-tank RIS, have all played a major role in promoting differential narratives around accountability in SSC, oscillating between open diplomatic resistance and a policy-normative and knowledge entrepreneurship. RIS, who intellectually leads on the development cooperation agenda within India, has come with new lexicons and new spaces—or 'tables', as practitioners in the field often call it—such as the Delhi Process, in which Southern actors can sit together to discuss development cooperation 'from the South'. At the same time, both Indian diplomats and RIS scholars have not only watered down initial propositions on common measurement frameworks (such as the 2015 NeST framework) but also repeatedly argued that neither evaluation of SSC initiatives nor common standardised templates for reporting development cooperation flows were 'relevant or desirable' (M. Chakrabarti 2018, 28). RIS has used its reputation and resources to convey policy debates and trainings (such as the ITEC Programme and the IBSA Fellowship), and to publish Southern critical voices towards existing aid accountability frameworks, disseminating alternative views on how SSC accountability, and SSC measurement, should look like.[436]

Domestically, however, RIS have not employed consistent efforts to operationalise a 'Southern', 'Asian' or 'Indian' way to practice accountability. Besides numerous opinion pieces on quantification and evaluation, RIS scholars have done little to test out these views or made them public to domestic and international audiences. Diplomatic unease with the topic is at the heart of the absence of measurement experimentation domestically and reflects not only a long tradition of asserting India's global reformist stances but also the ways in which foreign policy is produced, debated and contested within India.

Neither the 'public policy/public spending' nature of international development efforts (an understanding underpinning Brazilian diplomatic narratives and *Cobradi* reports) nor the 'taxpayers' money' argument (found in several Northern donors) are consistently mobilised by Indian governmental and quasi-governmental actors. Rather these were often rebuked as a 'Northern ODA logic not an SSC or Indian concern'. One RIS scholar interviewed argued that SSC horizontality/demand-driven approach required no assessment efforts from India as a provider, since partner countries themselves ensure satisfactory implementation and should be the one leading on assessment efforts.[437]

[436] A recent vehicle for that is RIS own journal, the Development Cooperation Review. Published since 2018, the journal aims to 'fill an important knowledge gap' and contribute to global development debates with knowledges and voices from scholars and practitioners from the South. In the Editorial of its first edition, RIS editorial team further clarified the journal's identity stating that 'the necessity of a publication that analyses development cooperation landscape through a Southern lens cannot be over emphasised, given the prevailing practice of looking at SSC with a typical Northern perspective' (RIS 2018, 1).

[437] INT-IN-11. A slightly modified rendition can be found in M. Chakrabarti (2019, 46), when he states that: 'Notwithstanding the need for impact assessment, it is to be clearly understood that such demand for accountability and assessment should also emerge from the partner that asked for support and not from any third party that is not a party engaged in cooperation'.

Hence, RIS analysts' calls for the development of 'Southern-grown' methodologies to show results and 'empirically validate' the 'nature and extent of mutual benefits generated out of Indian's development cooperation' (M. Chakrabarti 2016, 12), remained declaratory abstract considerations. Backed by a traditional realist vision that foreign policy should/could not be subjected to planning or evaluation[438] and by the ongoing geopolitical discomfort with the agenda, RIS kept generating global measurement battles while carrying out 'business and usual' at home.[439] This contrasts with the Brazilian landscape characterised by a series of epistemic and policy-applied debates within the foreign policy/SSC community on how to evaluate foreign policy gains and within the ecosystem of cooperation implementing agencies about mutual benefits.

As a consequence, India has to date no official public guidelines and methodologies to quantify, report and/or evaluate its development cooperation. Considering quantification, New Delhi has not yet formally defined the exact 'boundaries around the kind of activities that should be counted as development cooperation' (Aneja 2015, 2), although RIS itself has been advancing the idea of an 'Indian development compact' comprised of five components: trade and investment; technology; skills upgrade; LOCs; and grants (Chaturvedi 2016). Official data on development assistance is not completely absent, but remains fragmented and not necessarily publicly accessible: 'One can be lost in data', I was once told by an Indian researcher.[440] While the Exim Bank has its own statistics on the LOCs scheme, information on the overall portfolio (past and present) or a detailed breakdown of MEA's budgetary allocations for development cooperation are not publicly available. In the recent years, India's high-level planning body NITI Aayog has put forward the *SDG India Index* spanning most SDGs but leaving Goal 17 (concerning countries' international cooperation in support of the agenda) outside the monitoring framework.[441] While the decision reflects the widely acknowledge data challenges to monitor the implementation of certain goals (K. Kumar and Anand 2019), it also illustrates a political decision not to engage with the technicalities and come up with measurable indicators, even if imperfect.[442]

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[438] A rich discussion on how different diplomatic apparatus across the world perceive the issue of diplomatic planning and evaluation can be seen in Belli and Nasser (2018).

[439] INT-IN-7; INT-BR-40.

[440] INT-IN-21. A similar assessment was shared by Indian SSC researcher Dr. Renu Modi, from the University of Mumbai, in a recent interview to the India-UK Development Partnership Forum, available at https://www.iukdpf.com/interview-professor-renu-modi-on-india-africa-partnerships/ (last access: 15/12/2020).

[441] See https://niti.gov.in/sdg-india-index (last access: 30/07/2020).

[442] According to Kumar and Anand (2019), NITI Aayog recognised the data challenges and explained their decision to prioritise indicators where there was 'state-wise data'. In the Latin American context, ECLAC has also highlighted the data-challenges countries in the region encountered to monitor SDG number 17 (ECLAC 2018). The same challenges have also been discussed by the UN Statistical Commission, which leads on the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. In 2020, the Commission has decided to establish a Working Group on Measurement of Development Support, in line with Agenda 2030 target 17.3 ('Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources'). This work will feed into ongoing debates about devising new measures for the different components of development support (ODA, SSC, triangular cooperation, and other public and private flows).

Formal democratic checks-and-balances, including parliamentary budgetary reviews, have allowed for outsiders to externally estimate Indian flows, based on budget allocations (Chanana 2009; Mullen and Arora 2016; I. Mitchell, Ritchie and Rogerson 2020). However, estimations are deemed methodologically unsatisfactory. This is due, first, to the breaks between commitments and actual disbursement/project implementation, which expanded in the last years as a resulting of the increasing 'assertive' or even 'populist' diplomatic moves, as framed by some experts.[443] Second, because in the case of LOCs what gets reported in budgets are the governmental subsidies (guarantees and interest equalisation) rather than the total value of the loans, for which India borrows from global capital markets and then lends to its Southern partners countries with lower-interests rates and longer repayment schedules (GoI/MoF 2015).[444]

RIS has in the past tried out to create a comprehensive database of past and present SSC flows, an effort that was considered not only technically challenging but also politically sensitive. According to a research participant, besides the difficulties to retrieve data from national institutions implementing SSC initiatives and the methodological dilemmas (including the ones found in Brazil regarding how to define modalities and how to monetisation past investments in technologies), political tensions were a major factor: 'India is not ready for scrutiny', he stated.[445] In the end, the estimate was neither finalised nor published. Discomfort with measurement is also clearly visible when others, such as independent think tanks, tried to count Indian development cooperation autonomously. Both the MEA and RIS not only made difficult for external researchers to access relevant data[446] but also tried to either minimise or openly rebuked findings that showed inconsistencies or mismatches between budget allocation and stated geographical policy priorities, such as in the case of granting more loans to African governments than following its 'Neighbourhood First' policy (Mullen and Arora 2016).

As for evaluation, Indian efforts remain incipient, as highlighted by SSC scholars (e.g., Esteves 2018; Rizzo 2019a; Milani 2019). RIS has conducted assessments of certain initiatives, including India's Small Grant Development Projects in Nepal, India-Mozambique collaboration on solar technology, the ITEC programme, and India-Ethiopia agricultural investments partnerships. Yet these were largely internal assessments, inaccessible to outsiders, even if some findings have been shared by RIS scholars as discussion papers or in NeST-related international events and/or publications (e.g. S. Kumar 2015; NeST 2019).[447] Unlike Brazil, until very recently there was no notice of MEA commissioning external/independent assessment studies. In 2019, however, the Indian NGO PRIA received funding from the Ministry to do a 'civil society assessment' of LOCs in Bangladesh.[448] While an innovation from a state-society relations

[443] INT-IN-7; INT-ODP-5.
[444] INT-IN-7; INT-IN-16.
[445] INT-IN-21.
[446] INT-IN-16; INT-IN-7; INT-BR-18.
[447] INT-IN-11; INT-IN-9; INT-IN-16.
[448] The final report not publicly available and could not be retrieved.

perspective, this collaboration made visible the embedded tensions of the 'insiders-collaboration' and 'friendly critique',[449] a constitutive element in social mobilisation dynamics around 'Global India', I will explore below and in Chapter 7.

Another recent dynamic relates to the role of the 'traditional' development apparatus. In 2019, two Indian think tanks (the Public Affairs Centre and RIS) received UNOSSC research grants to assess Indian SSC initiatives, including the ITEC programme (UNOSSC 2020). While international incentives can create opportunities for the government to experiment measuring SSC and foster greater publicity in the knowledge production around SSC, as discussed in Chapter 4, they bring along their own logics and contradictions. This includes the traps of measuring to perform success to international audiences trumping the use of measurement to understand and learn from past experiences (Eyben and Guijt 2015; Honig 2020) and the democratic tensions embedded in reinforcing a historical pattern of 'Indian elites justifying its initiatives to external audiences than to its own' (Kaviraj 2010, 34).

Measuring 'from below'

Against the backdrop of MEA and RIS reluctant approaches, measurements of Indian SSC strongly relied on efforts 'from below': by non-governmental knowledge actors and the Indian voluntary sector in partnership with a range of international peers. Civil society-led efforts, including studies and policy debates on quantification or independent studies on the performance of Indian SSC initiatives on the ground, came from autonomous think tanks (such as the Centre for Policy Research - CPR and Observer Research Foundation - ORF), national NGOs (such as Participatory Research in Asia – PRIA, Vasudha Foundation, the NGO-umbrella Voluntary Action Network India – VANI and Praxis Institute), or from Indian activists in the BRICS Feminist Watch. These actors have often acted in partnership with international entities such as Oxfam India, Action Aid India, The Asia Foundation or the Heinrich Böll Foundation, and relied on their resources to watchdog 'Global India'. Oxfam, in particular, has been a major knowledge producer and a convening actor; enabling national CSOs to scrutinize SSC 'from below' and sharing those with organisations in other Southern providers like Brazil, China, Mexico and South Africa.[450] Table 2, below, gives a panorama of these knowledge outputs on Indian SSC developed by Indian civil society.

[449] INT-IN-8; INT-IN-6; INT-IN-1.

[450] As mentioned in Chapter 3, most of this work has been done in the context of Oxfam BRICSAM and LEAP initiatives, which ran until 2018 and received funding from the European Union and the Gates Foundation to strengthen civil society voices within 'rising powers' (Stephen and Zürn 2019).

Table 2 - Civil society-led studies to measure India's development cooperation

Knowledge Output	Leading organisations	Partnership/Support	Publication year
India's Global Footprints	Voluntary Action Network India -VANI	Heinrich Böll Foundation India	2013
Indian Development Cooperation Research (IDCR) project	Centre for Policy Research - CPR	Asia Foundation	2014-2017
Development Finance and Cooperation in SSC with Special Focus on India	Voluntary Action Network India -VANI	Bread for the World	2015
India-Africa Partnership: A Civil Society Perspective	Voluntary Action Network India -VANI	Heinrich Böll Foundation India	2015
A Study of the India-Bhutan Energy Cooperation Agreements and the Implementation of Hydropower Projects in Bhutan	Vasudha Foundation	Oxfam India	2016
Future of Development Cooperation: Policy Priorities for an Emerging India	Institute for Sustainable Development and Governance	Oxfam India	2016
India's Development Cooperation: Case of Four Countries	Voluntary Action Network India -VANI	Heinrich Böll Foundation India	2016
Engagement of Indian CSOs in South-South Cooperation. A compilation of case studies	Participatory Research in Asia - PRIA	Heinrich Böll Foundation India	2016
India's Development Cooperation with Bangladesh. A focus on Lines of Credit	Participatory Research in Asia - PRIA	Oxfam India	2017
Development and Approach of BRICS New Development Bank	Voluntary Action Network India -VANI	Heinrich Böll Foundation India	2017
India's Grants and Investments in Africa	Voluntary Action Network India -VANI	Heinrich Böll Foundation India	2017
India's Development Assistance to Nepal: Case of the Education Sector	Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations - ICRIER	Oxfam India	2018
India-Sri Lanka Development Cooperation with a Special Focus on Indian Housing Project for Internally Displaced Persons	Institute for Sustainable Development and Governance - ISDG	Oxfam India	2018
Methodology for Tracking Development Assistance from India	Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability		2018
India's Development Assistance and Connectivity Projects in Nepal	Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations - ICRIER	Oxfam India	2018
Gender Monitoring of the New Development Bank. Major District Roads, Madhya Pradesh, India. Key Findings	BRICS Feminist Watch	Heinrich Böll Foundation India	2018

Source: Author's compilation

Consequently, and unlike the Brazilian case, there has been no open measurement 'duelling' taking place. Rather civil society measurement has largely filled a knowledge gap, from 'from below'. Independent evaluation-like studies have excavated specific country case studies, sometimes with field-based research, thus contributing to the overall policy debate with data from the ground and with partners' voices. PRIA-Oxfam's study on Indian LOCs to Bangladesh, for instance, was conceived as an 'independent and truthful assessment of the mutual benefits of such ties between countries' (K. Chakrabarti and Bandyopadhyay 2017, iv). The study explicitly adopts an 'effectiveness lens' to the subject, problematising what they called an 'Indian bias' in the LOCs scheme, lack of transparency at the project level and lack of civil society participation in monitoring and assessing projects' impacts.

Despite being modest research efforts, civil society-led publicly available assessments contrast with the lack of publicity in the government side, further politicising, 'from below', the 'transparency problem' in official bodies. As framed by an Indian CSO representative:

> *There is an academic interest and an industry in the Western world because documents are available there. The Indian government could promote Southern scholarship if they wanted, but for that documents must be put into circulation. If not, how then do you counter…How do you say you are "better than the OECD"? How do you go beyond the talking-show?*[451]

Autonomous efforts were met with a mix of selective openness, indifference and resistance from the MEA.[452] RIS itself played an important mediator role both as a gatekeeper and as an enabler.[453] RIS has, on the one hand, filtered who had access to information, in what ways, and how external measurement could/should influence official policy.[454] At the same time, RIS had oversight of the 'invited spaces for participation' (Gaventa 2006) constructed around Indian SSC. One way this selective opening up was done was through the Indian Forum for International Development Cooperation (FIDC). The Forum is a multi-stakeholder space hosted by RIS that gathers invited Indian CSOs, think tanks, academics and representatives of MEA 'to research and create public consciousness' of Indian development cooperation (Chaturvedi et al. 2014, 24).

The origins of the Forum respond to a demand by Indian CSOs for participation in development cooperation policymaking, which was met with openness by the MEA around the time DPA was also being set-up. Growing participation claims inside India were enabled by favourable opportunity structures (political, material and symbolic) in transnational networks (of development researchers and INGOs from *Aidland* and from other emerging powers, like Brazil and South Africa) interested in strengthening Indian

[451] INT-IN-8.
[452] INT-IN-8; INT-IN-20; INT-IN-4; INT-BR-18.
[453] For a discussion on the concept of mediation and mediators, see Von Lieres and Piper (2014).
[454] INT-IN-6; INT-IN-4; INT-IN-18; INT-IN-1; INT-IN-14.

actors to monitor country's global footprint.[455] In what later became an increasingly restrictive environment for social mobilisation, the Forum is perceived by insiders as a valuable, and almost unique, multi-stakeholder space.[456]

FIDC has been a leading voice in the measurement debate within India, but has done so in a conflict-avoiding way. According to one interviewee, for certain Forum members it was important to challenge MEA's general view that measuring was 'a waste of time and money' or that 'there was no need' for this kind of effort. In order to do so, they decided to push the agenda from within based on the assumption that, as I was told: 'even if the MEA is apathic to accountability they cannot afford not to learn'.[457] Still according to an insider, 'learning' has been a more palatable framing than 'accountability' or 'M&E' and one that makes sense to MEA and Exim Bank bureaucrats, a comment resonating across different stakeholders in India but also in China (see below).

The accountability problem with Indian Lines of Credit

While public scrutiny and formal oversight of Indian development cooperation have been of low intensity, a notable exception is Indian development finance and in particular India's Exim Bank operations. As with BNDES in Brazil, the materiality of India's LOCs/IDEAS made it an object of scrutiny. LOCs constitute the bulk of Indian development cooperation expenditure (Chaturvedi 2012; Chenoy and Joshi 2016). As of December 2019, 257 LOCs covering 61 countries had been signed, with credit commitments aggregating 25.15 billion USD (The Economic Times 2020).[458] According to India's Exim Bank, African countries are the major beneficiaries of the scheme (Exim Bank 2014).[459]

During its first phase, until 2015, the initiative was caught in a series of 'implementation issues', as my Indian participants would often frame, including slow and/or poor project implementation and corruption scandals involving the tendering process to Indian firms.[460] LOCs implementation rates decreased and both the delays and the poor quality of completed projects became object of complaints by borrowing countries in the neighbourhood and in Africa (Dye 2016; D. Mitra 2017).[461] As a consequence, Exim Bank became

[455] According to internal accounts, the Forum itself was born of a discussion forum held at RIS in January 2013 as part of the inception workshop for the 'State of the Debate of Indian Development Cooperation' study; in collaboration with Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and the UK-based IDS Rising Powers in International Development programme, funded by DFID. This information was confirmed by IDS researchers leading on the project at the time.
[456] INT-IN-8; INT-IN-1.
[457] INT-IN-8.
[458] When described in terms of India's GDP, this amount of loaned capital would amount to nearly 1%, in 2017 (D. Mitra 2017). Yet, if one considers only the 'interest equalisation support' allotted by GoI through the Budget this was, until 2015, approximately 252 million USD, or Rs 1,904 crore (Iyer 2015).
[459] Importantly, a single project can receive more than one LOC. For example, the Nyabarongo Dam, in Rwanda, was built with funding from two different LOCs (Dye 2018).
[460] As mentioned, these got media coverage. See, for instance, Iyer (2015); The Economic Times (2015); D. Mitra (2017).
[461] INT-IN-13; INT-IN-17.

vulnerable to financial and reputational risks.[462] To counter these, in 2015, the scheme underwent a comprehensive review, described by the MEA as: 'Try[ing] and improv[ing] the process so that projects are better conceived, prepared, appraised and implemented. Greater transparency and accountability are also sought to be engendered' (Iyer 2015).

Reforming India's South-South development finance

The 2015 reforms promoted changes in how LOCs were managed. Administered by the MEA's territorial divisions in the first decade, the scheme started to be administered by DPA, in closer dialogue with the Exim Bank. There were also transparency-related changes whereby the Exim Bank expanded public information on its operations. Transparency was, on the one hand, pursued through outreach efforts to explain the new guidelines to different stakeholders, including Indian companies, industry/trade associations, partner governments in Africa and the general public in India.[463] Exim also made LOCs statistics from 2002 onwards available on its website,[464] which made many Indian SSC experts cognisant of Exim transparency (particularly when compared to MEA records).[465] Some, however, remained critical of existing statistics only describing broad bilateral loans flows, with no disaggregated data by project, builders and/or sector. Besides the 'clubbing' of multiple projects on a same bilateral loan, critics also pointed to the persistent lack of disclosure on project implementation and assessments (K. Chakrabarti and Bandyopadhyay 2017).[466]

Alongside transparency issues, the 2015 reforms have also led to more stringent guidelines on the tendering process and on post-sanction by the Exim Bank, opening the way for closer alignment to international standards on procurement and to the establishment of a Project Preparation Fund (PPF).[467] The Fund seeks to articulate, refine and consolidate partner's demands to improve the financial and physical feasibility of projects, including assessment of country systems and debt concerns (Viswanathan and Mishra 2019).[468] Having to fix delivery and implementation, the Exim Bank has moved away from its initial fairly 'hands-off' approach (Dye 2016; Mawdsley 2019), at least in the project design and preparation phases. This

[462] Already present in 2015, these risks have not dissipated. Because the Exim kept lending, until 2013, to companies that are currently undergoing insolvency proceedings, their loans became non-performing assets for the Bank. As a consequence, and due to the explicit credit guarantee from the government embedded in LOCs, by 2019 the bank needed capital infusion. See https://www.bloombergquint.com/business/why-the-government-had-to-step-in-to-support-indias-exim-bank (last access 28/06/2020).
[463] This was done for instance through the Confederation of Indian Industry-Exim Bank Conclaves on India Africa Project Partnership, held since 2005. The initiative was launched by CII in partnership with the Exim Bank of India and with the support of the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. See https://www.ciieximafricaconclave.com/ (last access: 21/09/2020).
[464] See Government of India - Lines of Credit Statistics, available at https://www.eximbankindia.in/lines-of-credit-GOILOC.aspx (last access: 29/06/2020).
[465] INT-IN-7; INT-IN-16; INT-ODP-5; INT-ODP-2.
[466] INT-IN-5; INT-IN-7; INT-IN-16. I thank Udisha Saklani for the expression of 'clubbing'.
[467] INT-IN-13.
[468] INT-IN-15; INT-ODP-5; INT-IN-17.

includes not only the PPF but also enhanced compliance and due-diligence in the biding process by Indian companies and throughout execution.

The reforms also formally gave an enhanced monitoring role for Indian actors (Exim Bank, DPA and Indian diplomats in-country) during the project cycle.[469] Despite the new provisions, M&E at the project-level remains feeble. Currently, the government mostly assesses the delivery by the Indian contractor, monitors the repayment, and conducts missions to monitor execution. In theory, the Exim Bank conducts post-project monitoring to assure due-diligence and mitigate eventual complaints about quality. In practice, however, India relies on partner governments to send reports after completion, which they do not always do according to an Indian MEA staffer.[470] From an Indian point of view, follow-up up is deemed important also to prevent a 'bad contractor' to bid again and prevent further harm to India's image and relationships with partners.[471] Corruption was also mentioned by governmental interviewees as a concern taken seriously. Their framing was elusive when referring to Indian contractors (an 'implementation issue'), but more explicit when mentioning the borrowing countries: 'We are very sensitive to money being used for good purposes. We know there is a lot of corruption issues in Africa…', I was told by one senior Exim Bank representative.[472]

The uneasy 'development effectiveness' issue

Primarily conceived as an instrument of economic diplomacy (Saxena 2016), concerns with 'development effectiveness' are not yet fully at (although not completely off) the table now that India has advanced on strengthening and streamlining internal management processes.[473] According to one MEA representative:

> *The sustainability issue, the business model, the green component of it: we are starting to ask ourselves these questions. Maybe in five years from now, in our next review, this might be there. Steps towards that are the Project Preparation Facility and the consultants. We are now doing the pre-project plugging. Projects are still struggling, some operating below their capacity.*[474]

A RIS scholar concurred on the incipient nature of effectiveness-related reflections, both in the case of the Exim Bank and in other SSC bureaucracies.[475] When inquired about how the government assesses the development impact of LOCs-funded projects, one Exim Bank representative responded that

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[469] INT-IN-15; INT-IN-17; INT-IN-13.
[470] INT-IN-17.
[471] In 2015, Modi has also promised to create a Joint Monitoring Mechanism with the African Union to improve India's delivery, which so far has remained on paper.
[472] INT-IN-15.
[473] INT-IN-13. See https://www.cii.in/VideoDetail.aspx?enc=vibtX7ue2YJFp+e6vZFe7gfoOJ01R1powELK7A9ORb4= (last access: 30/07/2020)
[474] INT-IN-13.
[475] INT-IN-11.

'development impact is what partner governments say to us'.[476] The representative also stated that the Bank has no written socio-environmental safeguards and that socio-environmental risks assessments are under partners' responsibilities, as well as eventual rehabilitations and/or compensations resulting from funded projects.[477] One interlocutor in the MEA framed this as a 'respectful approach',[478] whereby the responsibility is on the host government: 'We can raise these concerns and hope they will be dealt in the beginning of the project cycle. But it is their responsibility', added another MEA representative.[479] Yet, according to an Exim Bank staffer, these considerations are 'kept in mind' when assessing demands from partners, mentioning an 'a priori objection' to funding projects related to mining and other projects 'that could lead to displacement'.[480]

This same interviewee affirmed that, since 2003, no socio-environmental harm has ever happened in the context of a LOC-funded project, a claim challenged by other interviewees in academia and civil society.[481] An emblematic instance where the official benign rhetoric clashed with other stakeholders' perspectives on the negative impacts of LOC-funded initiatives is the case of the short-lived grassroots transnational campaign against a growing number of large scale land acquisitions ('land grabbing', in the campaigners' words) by Indian companies in Ethiopia. According to activists and scholars, part of these investments relied on loans opened by the Exim Bank to the Ethiopian government to expand country's sugar sector (Mawdsley 2014b; Chenoy and Joshi 2016; Michael and Baumann 2016; Mawdsley and Roychoudhury 2016; Jain and Marcondes 2017; S. Moyo, Jha and Yeros 2019).[482]

The UK has also expanded its technical dialogue with the Exim Bank on issues of development effectiveness. In 2016, the then DFID India Office and the Bank agreed to discuss project design and evaluation and jointly work to establish Exim's monitoring systems (DFID 2018b). DFID procured a consultancy with the private firm KPMG to provide training for the Exim Bank staff and streamline existing monitoring processes and standardising tools and templates for the LOCs. This partnership also included a technology transfer component, with DFID assisting the bank to adopt 'an integrated IT system on the lines of DFID's own Aid Management Programme AMP' (ibid).

Talking about development impacts was seen by one DFID staffer as 'a practical and helpful approach to accountability' and one that works best with rising powers than lecturing or stepping into 'OECD language'

[476] INT-IN-15.
[477] INT-IN-15; INT-IN-17.
[478] INT-IN-13.
[479] INT-IN-17.
[480] INT-IN-15.
[481] INT-IN-20; INT-IN-16; INT-IN-5; INT-IN-10.
[482] The campaign sought to give voice to general fear of 'land grabbing' by Indian companies as well as specific unheard complaints by local groups, including indigenous peoples in the Gambella region of Ethiopia, of land expropriation, displacement, as well as other human rights abuses against those who resisted or failed to comply with the relocation policies (Business and Human Rights 2013).

like socio-environmental safeguards.[483] Being 'useful' to institutions like the Exim, which DFID considered to be 'open', 'less-political' and 'committed to change', meant sharing management tools (including the software used by DFID) but also conducting joint project monitoring missions.[484] While in an initial stage, the exchanges between DFID and Exim Bank illustrate a possible arrangement for future negotiations on accountability and effectiveness issues between DAC-members and India around so-called 'technical' and/or 'management' dimensions of development cooperation accountability, at the country-level (Paulo and Reisen 2010; Bracho 2015).

Re-thinking accountability in and beyond India's Lines of Credit

India's Exim Bank is not only, materially-wise, the largest instrument within India's 'SSC compact' but also the most domestically salient one. The problematisation of accountability in the context of LOCs responded to a combination of private sector dynamics (both incentives and pressures),[485] domestic accountability mechanisms (oversight mechanisms and media scrutiny), and management concerns with weak performance and 'things going wrong' (corruption, slow delivery, complaints by partners on the quality of projects). Considering the dual—export promotion and development cooperation—nature of LOCs, reforms responded to New Delhi's geopolitical, geo-economic and reputational concerns to deliver on Southern partners' expectations and to balance China's disbursements in South Asia and Africa. Disputes between the MEA and the Ministry of Finance on how to better proceed illustrate, however, the challenges to find the right balance between a 'hands-off approach' and mounting management and reputation considerations pushing in the opposite direction. As Indian disbursements continue to grow, these new concerns tend to override previous 'Indian ways of doing cooperation' that might have served the country well when the amounts and stakes were smaller.[486] As framed by one MEA representative: 'Reputation concerns relate to both pride and liabilities. (…) At the end of the day, is an Indian company, Indian name, Indian bilateral relations. (…) Governments have to feel that India is a good partner'.[487]

Overall, concerns with 'India's good international image'[488] and with protecting country's image as a reliable partner and its diplomatic relations, rather than concerns with public accountability within India, have been a major driver for the pro-accountability reforms unfolding within Indian LOCs scheme.[489] Besides improving project delivery and performance to serve India's geopolitical and geo-economic ambitions, reforms also included a renegotiation of what mutual accountability means in this South-South

[483] INT-ODP-5.

[484] These so-called 'technical dialogues' were considered, nonetheless, an advancement for DFID in light of the inherent tensions and political sensitivities of building a dialogue among equals between a former metropole and its former colony and India's preference to look at Japan, as its role model within the DAC, not the UK. (INT-IN-13; INT-ODP-5).

[485] INT-IN-1; INT-IN-14; INT-IN-16; INT-IN-2; INT-IN-3.

[486] For a more detailed discussion on the reforms, see Saxena (2016).

[487] INT-IN-17.

[488] INT-IN-15.

[489] INT-IN-15; INT-IN-20.

development finance scheme, since better performance by Indian contractors means accountability to partners' developmental needs or at least greater responsivity to their stated preferences. As such, reforming LOCs/IDEAS to 'fix' diplomatic relations created, regardless of India's initial intention, an opening for these same relations to meet the promises of a 'win-win'—at least from a government-to-government perspective—South-South relationship.

However, while reforms might have 'fixed' some accountability issues, they also left other dimensions of the broader agenda untouched. First, LOCs reforms provided yet another example of the inherent risks of 'accountability gaps' under the *country systems approach* adopted by India's Exim Bank, as well as by other development banks from/led by Brazil and China, an issue examined in the next chapter. Second, the public-private nature of India's LOCs complexifies the notion of state responsibility. As argued by Jain and Marcondes (2017, 45): 'It is difficult to speak about defined contours of accountability and at times even motivations when interfacing in cooperation occurs through actors with mixed identities and purposes'. While the debate around business responsibility is not a new one,[490] is clear that India's 'business-friendly' SSC approach (Chenoy and Joshi 2016, 99) adds another layer of complexity into the politics of accountability in Southern development finance.

From an audit perspective, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) is not involved in overseeing the implementation of LOCs. The CAG can only scrutinise the payment of interest equalisation and guarantees from the MEA to the Exim Bank, as the loan itself is technically not money being spent from the exchequer (rather is money borrowed from international markets and supposedly repaid) (D. Mitra 2017). The particularities of such export credit tool also affect SSC measurement issues. From an evaluation perspective, several Southern scholars validate India's official justification of LOCs' 'tied procurement' as being about 'mutual gains' not 'conditionalities' and that assessment methodologies should reflect that (Aneja 2015; Chenoy and Joshi 2016; Besharati 2018). Others, however, argued that this model could *de facto* work as 'process conditionalities' and reduce development outcomes for partners (K. Chakrabarti and Bandyopadhyay 2017; Bhattacharya, Rahman and Muhtasim 2019).[491] Bhattacharya and colleagues (ibid, 42) further argued that 'the service-tie conditionality limits the scope of capacity development and improvement of expertise of Bangladeshi officials in the management and implementation of major infrastructure projects. This could potentially make Bangladesh dependent on Indian firms in implementing major infrastructure projects'.

Regarding quantification, no agreement has been reached on how to account for the 'development contribution' of LOCs. While considering the Indian contribution to be the difference between the rate

[490] At the UN-level this has been for long championed both in the human rights pillar, with the business and human rights framework (see UN 2008) and in the context of the Global Compact.
[491] INT-IN-7; INT-IN-8.

India borrowed from international markets and the rate is lending, there is still debate on whether to consider the rate India is borrowing or the rate the partner country would have paid if borrowing directly from commercial banks in the market.[492] This apparently arithmetic issue bears, nonetheless, implications for Indian ranking in the 'generosity contest' and (potentially) for how domestic publics perceive this instrument. Some development practitioners within India agree that LOCs pose conceptual accountability challenges that require debates to go beyond the usual 'taxpayers' argument', found in ODA, since the amounts disbursed through LOCs are a combination of money borrowed from the market and government's subsidies offered to Indian companies to export services. Purely importing the taxpayers' logic without translating it to the Indian context could, as many of my Indian interlocutors pointed out,[493] not only be technically inappropriate and politically misleading but also strategically unhelpful considering the low tax-base in India (A. Gupta 2017).

Equally absent from mainstream debates is the relationship between state capture and private sector collusion, or what Gupta (ibid) calls 'horizontal corruption', and negative development impacts on the ground.[494] These linkages—relevant to India domestic development as to its development cooperation—have received comparatively less media and civil society attention than performance and taxpayers' issues. This nexus is, nonetheless, at the core of how certain radical grassroots groups see the SSC accountability problem. As put by a self-identified Indian grassroot activist:

> *Accountability is where they put Indian public money, is disclosure and financial transparency, is adhering to standards, is to respect peoples' movements and not to unduly subsidise Indian corporates. The same human rights and socio-environmental standards that apply domestically, the Exim has to adhere.*[495]

Having historically fought and resisted as civil society from a 'borrower/recipient' country where projects sometimes 'went wrong', representatives from grassroots groups further emphasised the need to foster solidarity between critical voices in India and those based in countries where India-funded projects happen. They also stressed the need to discursively link the debates on 'Global India' with domestic issues within India, as to forge the connections between groups working and fighting marginalisation and accountability issues within the country and those monitoring India's global footprint. It is clear, nonetheless, that domestic publics are still navigating ways to understand and engage with 'Global India' (and to dispute it). This makes the domestic landscape in India one of more or less visible and more or less publicly and politically salient problematisations of and negotiations over accountability in/of SSC, which might evolve within India if and when development cooperation itself becomes more materially and politically contested domestically.

[492] INT-IN-11.
[493] INT-IN-20; INT-IN-5.
[494] INT-IN-8.
[495] INT-IN-10.

China: cautiously practicing development cooperation accountability

China is currently the second largest economy in the world and yet defines itself as the 'world's largest developing country': one 'still facing a raft of severe challenges' (PRC SCIO 2019) while 'forging ahead and leading the way' (CPC 2020). China is also the most iconic Southern development cooperation provider, the one most people in *Aidland* have examined to understand what SSC looks like and where is heading to. China's development cooperation and the politics of accountability around it are, nonetheless, in many ways unique due to the volume of its development initiatives, the level of international scrutiny they receive, and the particularities of China's political and policy systems.

This section investigates SSC accountability debates and dynamics within China, the ways the 'SSC accountability problem' has been understood and dealt by the Chinese development cooperation/foreign aid[496] system, and the kinds of 'accountability reforms' it has generated. Chapter 7 will deal with another aspect of Chinese domestic landscape, namely pro-accountability social mobilisation. As explained in Chapter 2, my analysis of domestic dynamics within China is non-exhaustive and aims at complementing the findings coming from Brazil and India and expanding our understanding of the politics of accountability in development cooperation beyond Western and/or liberal democratic settings.

Looking at the Chinese domestic landscape, I posit that accountability in/of SSC has also become a problem for the Chinese Communist Party leadership as well as for aid/SSC bureaucrats and development experts. Having the former as a background, my analysis focuses mostly on the latter, arguing three things. First, China's critical, yet pragmatic, diplomatic stances on SSC accountability issues, chiefly on measurement (see Chapter 4), have generated their own manifestations within China. While holding critical stances towards the OECD-led 'Aid Effectiveness Agenda', those within the rapidly growing international development field in China[497] are vocalising their willingness to engage with existing aid accountability practices as to improve China's SSC and thus consolidate this field within China. Second, reputational concerns around SSC, which is a foreign policy and (geo)political-economic tool for China, have prompted management reforms to the existing 'foreign aid system' in China, including accountability-related reforms. Third, the Chinese government approach to accountability reforms is mostly managerial, carefully exploring ways to report and publicise flows in a controlled safe manner as well as to pilot evaluation tools.

[496] China historically referred to its international development cooperation as 'foreign aid'. China's major development cooperation bureaucracy has been for decades the Department of Foreign Aid within China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM). The term 'foreign aid' has been progressively complemented in the more recent years in both the policy and academic worlds by the use of the terms 'development cooperation' and 'South-South Cooperation' (CPC 2020) but not fully replaced. This section contains all three terms, which in my understanding are different sociopolitical and historical ways to refer to the same phenomenon.
[497] For a detailed analysis of this growing field within China, see Cheng (2020).

The reputational problem and China's development cooperation management reforms

Back in 2016, Chinese scholars Gu, Chen and Haibin (2016, 23) argued that China's foreign aid has been historically 'more political than developmental in nature'. They also characterised China's approach as one balancing an increasingly assertive development cooperation role while 'constantly appraising' what this empowered role should be (ibid, 31). Whereas the political and ever-changing nature of development cooperation is certainly not unique to China, one has to recognise the renewed political importance this tool has acquired for Beijing in the last two decades. In this context, I found that the Chinese government willingness to experiment with practicing accountability responds to a broader foreign policy concern with China's reputation—or 'country's image' as referred in China—as a distinctive but 'responsible power' and 'a good global citizen' (Shirk 2007; Leveringhaus and Sullivan de Estrada 2018). This translates into a will to be seen as a 'responsible development partner' and establishing good dialogue with existing development actors and norms (D. Zhang 2020).

Beyond global status, reputation also translates into specific development cooperation management and delivery concerns. Reputation and delivery meet, for instance, in the acute awareness Chinese officials and bureaucrats have of the financial, diplomatic and geopolitical implications of development projects 'going wrong' abroad (Jiang 2019; Yeophantong 2020). As framed by a Chinese scholar: 'The image of the project is the image of the country. As they say, there is no small issue in international relations (…) In the end, is one brand: China'.[498]

The amount of exposure of China's current portfolio makes the country particularly sensitive to external criticism, not only by traditional donors but also by partner governments and local actors in host countries including the media (Mawdsley 2008; van Staden and Wu 2018). Increasing self-awareness has driven the Party, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) to pay more attention to a set of accountability issues in SSC projects. The Party is also cognisant of the potential negative repercussions this global exposure might generate internally, fuelling existing anxieties among Chinese citizens (several of them expressed online) around development and growth in the New Era (Shirk 2007; Ma 2019; Cheng 2020).[499] Mohan (2014) suggests that this 'self-awareness' also translates into a growing sense of 'social responsibility' within the state for its development and investment projects leading to what scholars named an 'internal reflexive analytical move' and a 'sharp learning curve' (Bräutigam 2009; Jiang 2019; Yeophantong 2020).

[498] INT-CH-3.

[499] The New Era is a term used by Xi Jinping, in 2017, to refer to the particular juncture of domestic and world change in China's developmental history. When proclaiming the New Era, Xi has announced his intention to lead China towards a range of economic reforms and to make China a more active player in international affairs for the good of humankind.

Although deeply political, these emerging reputational-related accountability problems have been perceived and dealt with by Beijing mostly through the broad lens of policy management, having prompted a set of managerial reforms that have culminated among other things in the creation, in 2018, of CIDCA, China's cooperation agency. CICDA has an explicit mandate to strengthen the planning, coordination and M&E China's development cooperation. Other accountability-related reforms include new guidelines on overseas investments on socio-environmental risks, including for specific sectors, such as mining, alongside new project-level risk assessment and impact mechanisms (Garzón 2014; Chun Zhang 2017).[500] Reforms also include new consultation mechanisms with other development partners and new partnerships with multilateral organisations to strengthen China's aid management system, including the socio-environmental dimensions of initiatives like the BRI and the China-initiated AIIB (D. Zhang 2017).[501] UNDP has, for instance, an area of work with Chinese governmental counterparts called 'experience sharing on foreign aid systems' and another with Chinese companies operating in other developing countries to enhance their regulatory frameworks and sustainable business practices, through studying and disseminating international and national 'best practices' (UNDP China 2016). Albeit different in their nature and scope, these reforms respond to a will to consolidate China's development cooperation management and practices, often framed by Chinese stakeholders in terms of 'improvement', 'betterment' and 'professionalisation'.[502]

China's relatively open, while still cautious, approach to an array of development accountability and management reforms stands between crafting its own 'uniquely Chinese' developmental knowledges and tools and pragmatically learning from others. At the same time, this approach is deeply shaped by Chinese hierarchical, performance-based and experimentation-guided policy styles (Qian 2018). The ways the 'SSC community' in China has navigated these tensions can be seen in issues of SSC measurement, to which I turn next.

Cautiously learning and piloting evaluations

> *We want to produce new development knowledge. We still do not know how.*
> *We used to be the objects, now we want to be subjects.*
> (Chinese scholar, Beijing, 2018)

For years now, internal assessments and reporting of development cooperation projects have been a standard management practice inside China's MOFCOM, led by the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation (CAITEC). These efforts have mostly focused on evaluating

[500] This include the 2012 China Banking Regulatory Commission's Green Lending Guidelines; the 2012 China International Contractors Association's Social Responsibility Guide for Chinese Contractors; the 2013 Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Environmental Protection's Environmental Protection Guidelines for Overseas Investment Partnerships; and the two documents from the China Chamber of Commerce for Minerals, Metals and Chemicals Importers and Exporters (Chun Zhang 2017). It also includes new Green Finance regulation (IIGF/UNE 2017).

[501] INT-CH-15; INT-CH-12.

[502] The same framing is found in the former DAC-China study group, which had a work stream on M&E run by the MOFCOM-affiliated institute CAITEC.

performance at the project activities-level (Esteves 2018; D. Zhang 2020).[503] To my interlocutors in China the current logic guiding country's accountability efforts is managerial: monitoring, evaluating and reporting serve as bureaucratic performance control. Assessment efforts, therefore, seek to capture 'micro-level' implementation issues rather than evaluating broader questions of development impact.[504] China's aid documentation tools and reporting templates, I was told by an UN worker, are mostly input-focused. In his words: 'They provide more fields with words to fill-in for describing implementation than for sustainability or development effectiveness issues'.[505]

However, standard managerial practices have started to coexist in recent years with a new discourse that combines classic OECD-DAC concerns with 'development effectiveness' with attempts to respond to China's own conceptions of what 'success' looks like in SSC. Esteves (2018) argues that since 2014, debates on M&E have gained a new momentum when MOFCOM issued its *Measures for the Administration of Foreign Aid*, announcing the implementation of an evaluation system. In 2018, the new Agency was explicitly mandated by the *Draft Foreign Aid Management Methods* with new enhanced M&E roles (Sun 2019). Commentators in China agree, nonetheless, that neither CIDCA's M&E role nor the evaluation system are fully consolidated: 'We are not there yet', as stated by one scholar.[506]

Parallel to the unfolding institutional changes, SSC practitioners and scholars have been experimenting and, more specifically, piloting M&E. *Piloting* is an emblematic feature of China's policy style of experimentation through 'directed improvisation' (Qian 2018). In development cooperation, this approach is found in the Special Economic Zones, in China's Agricultural Technology Demonstration Centres in Africa, and in the context of triangular cooperation (Xu et al. 2016; D. Zhang 2017; Chuanhong Zhang et al. 2019). The notion of piloting also features the discourses of high political officials, as shown in this quote by Liu Yongfu, director of the China State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development:

> *China is a developing country and also a responsible great power … While doing our own things well, we are supporting other [developing] countries by sharing our experiences even piloting poverty reduction within our capacity. We believe it is the right thing to do as we are a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the second largest economy in the world and a responsible great power.* (cited in D. Zhang 2020, 244).

Another important notion shaping Chinese emerging evaluation practices and accountability debates, more broadly, is *learning*. Learning was a term I often heard in my encounters with Chinese or China-based development practitioners. The idea of learning in the context of China's development cooperation

[503] INT-CH-4.
[504] INT-CH-5.
[505] INT-CH-15
[506] INT-CH-5; also INT-CH-4; INT-CH-3.

policymaking takes on a caution-related meaning that contrasts both with the assertive rhetoric of 'learning from China' (and from Chinese development 'models' and 'wisdoms' embedding the very expansion of China's SSC) and with the well-recognised historical development strategy for China of 'learning from the West' (Christensen, Lisheng and Painter 2008).[507] Examples of this restrained, humble and/or in-progress learning are found in expressions like: 'still learning', 'testing waters', 'not quite there', or even in the narrative of a powerhouse 'under a learning curve'. Development scholars have referred to China's 'cautious learning approach' adopted in the case of China-led multilateral banks (Serrano Oswald 2019), in triangular cooperation (D. Zhang 2020), and regarding Chinese state-owned enterprises going global (Jiang 2019; Yeophantong 2020). The framing is so prevalent that everyone seems to be 'learning how to cooperate' in/with China: businesses are learning how to operate globally, the government is learning how to provide development cooperation, academics are learning how to study 'Global China', UN agencies and traditional donors are learning how to work with China, the Chinese government is learning how to practice accountability.

The use of learning and piloting discourses are not only a reflection of the current triumph-anxiety feelings dominating China's development cooperation landscape in the current era (Cheng 2020) but also a strategic tool for Beijing. On the one hand, it allows China to keep its autonomy as a Southern partner, to screen for 'best practices' in a selective policy and normative borrowing and internalisation. On the other hand, these discursive strategies are also coherent with a broader strategy adopted by rising powers to navigate and sometimes downplay accountability calls. Such strategy fits rising powers' 'ambivalent responses' to global responsibility calls, as discussed in previous chapters, metaphorically named by Santos, Siman and Fernández (2019) as a 'Peter Pan Syndrome'.

Assessing agricultural cooperation

An example where learning and piloting discourses interact with growing efforts to measure SSC initiatives on the ground is found in the field of agriculture cooperation with Africa. Emerging evaluation studies on China's agricultural cooperation illustrate both Chinese knowledge actors' efforts to craft their differential approach to evaluation as well as their anxieties about it.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, in 2019, scholars from CAU, which is also the most active (if not the sole) Chinese institution in the NeST network, released one of the few (and possibly the first) publicly available external *ex post* evaluation of a Chinese SSC initiative. The study assesses China-Tanzania collaboration in agriculture through an evaluation framework that relied on the discussions held within NeST (see NeST

[507] According to the Chinese scholar Cheng Han, in the triumph narrative, 'learning' is also deemed by many to be the key to Chinese success, thus Chinese development knowledge becomes about teaching how Chinese learnt (from the West, itself, and less so, the South) (personal communication with Cheng Han, 2020).

2019). CAU—mainly its leading scholar, Li Xiaoyun[508]—is particularly connected to global development networks (Cheng 2020), both traditional development actors like DFID, GIZ and UNESCAP but also Southern ones, like NeST and UNOSSC.[509] Li and other CAU scholars have often worked as partners of the state, namely the Ministry of Agriculture and the International Poverty Reduction Center in China, in implementing agricultural development projects in Chinese rural villages and then sharing these solutions through SSC projects, notably in Africa (J. Huang 2017). CAU have also assessed some of these SSC initiatives, conducting mid-reviews of flagship projects such as the Agricultural Demonstration Centres.[510]

CAU's evaluation of China-Tanzania agricultural cooperation generated several knowledge outputs, some internal to the Chinese government and several others to external audiences, primarily international ones. As showed in Chapter 4, CAU partnered with UNOSSC to produce a paper where scholars explained their 'differentiated' evaluation approach to Chinese SSC. The paper highlights the purpose of this evaluation being 'to contribute to the knowledge base on SSC and provide an alternative evaluation framework for other partners to utilize' (CISSCA 2018, 7). This alternative way to evaluate, it is argued, responds to the 'initial' and 'uncertain stage' of China's SSC collaboration. In their words: 'Under the unguided circumstance, it is difficult to evaluate such dynamic and diversified cooperation activities using a predetermined rational framework' (ibid, 8).[511] To back that, CAU scholars bring a quote from one Chinese entrepreneur operating a business in Africa, which reads: 'We are all feeling the stones while crossing the river. There is no ready-made theoretical guidance or a clear path for us to follow. We can only rely on ourselves' (ibid, 8).

As stressed in Chapter 4, conceiving SSC initiatives as an 'emergent' and/or 'complex' enterprise has implications for the evaluation methods Southern scholars adopt when assessing them. Alike their Brazilian counterparts, and challenging mainstream development thinking on the use of (quasi-)experimental methods, CAU scholars defended their methodological choice to conduct a qualitative case study not only to better understand SSC 'successes and failures' but also due the insufficient data availability on SSC at a country level (NeST 2019).[512]

On and on, CAU scholars explicitly framed their work as 'tentative' or 'exploratory' evaluation efforts, arguing that 'how to establish a SSC framework suitable for China's own context is still a new area in China' (NeST 2019, 26). CAU scholar Xu Xiuli equally emphasised this learning dimension in her presentations at

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[508] Li was once described by China's English-language state-media outlet *Global Times* as the 'Warrior against poverty'(J. Huang 2017).

[509] INT-CH-3.

[510] INT-CH-4; INT-BR-43.

[511] For a similar characterisation of Brazilian agricultural cooperation as 'emergent', see Cesarino (2013).

[512] INT-CH-5. In their words, case studies provide an opportunity to put 'SSC against a macroscopic historical background' as to 'better understand the cooperation process and impact' (NeST 2019, 29). A similar argument was presented to me when discussing a growing interest, albeit still relatively marginal, within China to apply ethnographic methods to study China's development cooperation (INT-CH-3; INT-CH-6).

BAPA+40 side events. According to Xu, China is sensitive to international development lingo and to what other consultants and researchers do: 'We pay attention. Try to understand', she added, by also clarifying that 'rather than convergence-divergence debate, we need a cross-vergence, a learning from each other' (Xu 2019a). During one of NeST-led events in Buenos Aires on SSC impact assessment and M&E, Xu conveyed to the audience her account of how those issues play out in China. Below I reproduce an extract of her intervention, which contains numerous elements discussed above:

> *We need the data. Data is also important for the international level, to compare. So, how are we doing? We are learning. It is complicated with the ATDCs in Africa, so we are learning from the African Development Bank, the World Bank. The new Agency* [CIDCA] *has its first mission to establish an evaluation system. Last year we did a pilot with UNOSSC. But we are still working on that. To improve it. It is still in progress. These evaluations are not only for accountability but also for learning. These studies are more qualitative: they bring empirical data from the field. We are learning from the practice. The Chinese government is interested on this topic. But there is still lack of evaluation capacity in China.* (Xu 2019b).

A combined analysis of the CAU's report on China-Tanzanian cooperation, CAU scholars' contribution to the NeST (2019) report on M&E SSC, and Xu's description of the landscape during BAPA+40 provides a sample of China's own version of the 'SSC measurement paradox' and of the current tensions between the will to showcase China's SSC successes and the risks of playing the scrutiny game with 'traditional' scrutiny tools. This is complemented with an observation by another Chinese scholar on measuring and assessing achievements becoming important (or showing 'China-grown' efforts to measure SSC becoming important). According to her, China's solution has been to do it in 'a simple way, with simple indicators' and so far mostly through 'loose assessments' rather than 'strict evaluations'. In her words:

> *Has the cooperation increased the production? How many extensionists went to rural areas? (…) We do not care about gender issues. This is not our style. (…) We do not care about participation either. We do not need to think or talk about that. Because is already there. Development is anyway for the communities. But we need to see some changes. The evaluation is about general things (total production, selling, etc). The most important is the real performance in the field.*[513]

Encountering the global development apparatus

The quote above not only illustrates how North-South dynamics shape China's oppositional and differentiation claims vis-à-vis *Aidland* measurement practices but also offers an entry door to reflect on the role played by 'traditional' development actors in fostering this field within China. INGOs such as Oxfam Hong Kong or The Asia Foundation have published, earlier than governmental actors or academics,

[513] INT-CH-5.

their own evaluation studies on specific countries and issues.[514] Likewise, 'traditional' donors have also fostered external evaluations of China's SSC, such as in the case of the external assessment of China-Pakistan Development Corridor published by the German DIE using the NeST framework (Ali 2018; see Chapter 4). As mentioned, DAC donors have also engaged with the Chinese government and development experts on fostering the 'knowledge dimension' of China's development cooperation, and its impacts on the ground, notably in Africa. The UK, for instance, supported the creation of the China International Development Research Network (CIDRN), chaired by Li Xiaoyun from CAU and gathering around 20 other institutions (DFID 2018a). The UK has also initiated the China-UK Global Health Support Programme, which funds policy-relevant academic assessments of China's Global health development assistance (e.g., H. Yang, Liu and Guo 2018; H. M. Li et al. 2019; Y. Wang et al. 2019).[515]

Yet, unlike Brazil, partnerships with the traditional development apparatus have so far not played a strong role in creating opportunities to practice M&E. This can be explained by the fact that Beijing has been largely more 'cautious' (D. Zhang 2020) or 'careful' (Gu, Chen and Haibin 2016) with these partnerships and less open to experimenting with both triangular cooperation and M&E.[516] While the aforementioned joint initiatives have generated policy and research contributions on China's global development footprint (DFID 2018a),[517] its continuity after the original DFID grant ended in 2018 and its overall political relevance to the Chinese SSC system and developmental thinking is unclear.[518] Ultimately, unless higher-positioned and more influential Chinese bureaucrats and knowledge actors explicitly see the value of trying out and practicing measuring China's SSC with existing development actors, including traditional bilateral donors and UN agencies, their influence will remain marginal.[519]

Meanwhile, partnerships with UN agencies have already offered some venues for joint experimentation. China slowly but steadily expanded its triangular cooperation with UN agencies in the past decade. Compared to Brazil, China's partnerships with the UN took longer to take-off. The key UN partner for China remains UNDP, however, FAO, UNFPA and WFP have all expanded triangular cooperation

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[514] This includes, for instance, the 2015 Oxfam-led 'Perceptions on China-Lao Agricultural Investments', a joint partnership between Oxfam Hong Kong and the School of Economics and Management of Yunnan Agricultural University. It also includes the 2016 The Asia Foundation-led 'A Civil Perspective on China's Aid to Cambodia', final report of one-year joint programme sponsored by the China Office of the Asia Foundation and undertaken by Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, College of Humanities and Development Studies and the East China Normal University.

[515] China-UK Global Health Support Programme (GHSP) was launched in 2012 with about 12 million pounds funded by the United Kingdom. Between 2012 and 2019, the programme held five rounds of China-UK high-level dialogues, conducted studies on China Global Health Strategies to provide robust evidence for developing and issuing relevant national policies and supported the establishment of the China Global Health Network, in China. Though mostly academic assessments, the growing numbers of studies on Chinese global health engagements with Africa and along the BRI point to a growing interest of this area, which only tends to grow in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[516] INT-CH-4; INT-BR-43.

[517] Besides the health-related studies, mentioned above, another example of academic assessment developed by CAU scholars under the umbrella of CIDRN is Chuanhong Zhang et al. (2019) ethnographic analysis of China's Agricultural Centres in Mozambique.

[518] Personal communication with a senior Chinese scholar who participated in the Network (2019).

[519] INT-CH-5; INT-CH-17.

initiatives with China in the last 5 years (D. Zhang 2020; Mao 2020). Much of the new push has come from China itself, including under the umbrella of the BRI and through the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund, announced in 2015 by Xi with an initial commitment of 2 billion USD (Xinhua 2015).[520] With a first batch of triangular projects coming to an end, certain UN agencies have started to craft ways to review the collaboration with China and its outcomes.[521] UNFPA China, for instance, has recently finalised an internal review of its pilot 2016-2019 triangular cooperation programme with China.[522]

As with India, 'technical dialogues' seem to be *Aidland's* preferred modality to engage Beijing in accountability-related conversations (DFID 2016; D. Zhang 2017).[523] This is not only true for partnerships with UN agencies but also with other 'traditional' donors, like the UK or Australia. Examples of this mode of engagement includes the 2009-2011 China-DAC Study Group and the more recent UK-funded trainings for Chinese officials in leading UK development centres, like the Sussex-based Institute of Development Studies, 'focussing on aspects of aid practice (sectoral or general)' (DFID 2017a).[524] Another example is the recent partnership, in operation since 2016, between China and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to expand the work of the China-Zambia Agricultural Demonstration Centre. The Foundation has since opened an office in China expecting, according to Daisy Kambandu, the country program manager for the Centre in Zambia, to 'contribute to China's learnings' by 'providing indirect guidance on how aid is implemented at a local level' (The China Africa Project n.d.).[525]

These so-called technical exchanges illustrate ongoing mutual socialisation efforts happening between China and 'traditional' development organisations when it comes to doing and assessing SSC. Dialogues are seen by many in *Aidland* as capable to strengthen China's capacity to 'manage and deliver' development cooperation and socialise China into certain 'donorship' norms and behaviours.[526] At the same time, seen from China, the exchanges can also provide opportunities for 'mutual learning' or rather for 'the West to learn with China' (Gu, Chen and Haibin 2016, 132–33), finding, for instance, evaluation standards that are 'specific and relevant to Chinese foreign policy priorities, believes and values, but also to apply them to Western donors' (ibid). This new rendition of the 'development dance', borrowing from Swedlund (2017), is therefore far from over.

[520] INT-CH-12; INT-CH-15.
[521] INT-CH-4.
[522] INT-BR-43.
[523] INT-CH-12; INT-CH-15; INT-CH-4.
[524] IDS has been a longstanding partner of the UK government in producing aid-related studies that inform aid policymaking as well as in the so-called 'monitoring and learning' component of UK aid.
[525] Previous to working with China, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has partnered with the Brazilian government to expand the work of the WFP-Brazil CEAH. The partnership started to be negotiated in 2013 and has allowed the Centre to expand its 'knowledge-component' work as well as its work on malnutrition, between 2015-2018 (WFP 2014; CEAH 2020). The work with China on global development is available at https://www.gatesfoundation.org/Where-We-Work/China-Office/Supporting-Global-Development (last access: 30/11/2020).
[526] INT-ODP-5; INT-ODP-7; INT-OSS-4; INT-OSS-16; INT-OSS-6.

Navigating and controlling transparency

While the problem of assessing cooperation has been acted upon by the Chinese government through cautious bottom-up piloting, an alternative top-down controlled and curated approach is found on issues of quantification and reporting. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the 'transparency deficit' in China's SSC has been widely problematised globally due to data availability issues, to a miscomprehension of the nature of Chinese development cooperation and its instruments, and to anxieties from OECD-DAC members to socialise China (above any other Southern provider) into existing measurement standards and metrics. In response to these conformity pressures, but also in a strategic way, Beijing has more decisively acted on the matter, progressively expanding the availability of data on its cooperation flows, while still controlling the narrative that comes with it.

Despite not having a systematic and comprehensive reporting system in place—like Brazil's *Cobradi*, Mexico's *RENCID* or Colombia's *Accountability Strategy*[527]—China has released foreign aid-related data periodically. This has been done, first, through successive official policy documents: the two White Papers on Foreign Aid (2011, 2014) and more recently the white paper 'China and the World in the New Era' (2019). Data has been also published by MOFCOM, through its overall annual foreign aid budget and statistical yearbooks with data on flows of FDI, concessional and non-concessional loans, etc. (Grimm et al. 2011; Sears 2019; I. Mitchell, Ritchie and Rogerson 2020). In the context of the BRI, information on loans (committed and disbursed) became more frequent (and also more scrutinised by outsiders). CIDCA budget for 2019 (around 29 million USD), a tiny fraction of China's development cooperation spending, was also made public (Sun 2019).[528]

These multiple sources have allowed outsiders, including non-Chinese academics (e.g. Bräutigam 2009; Kitano 2018; also *AidData*)[529] and transparency groups (e.g., PWYF) to then attempt estimating China's development flows, in an effort described by Grimm et al. (2011, 22) 'putting together a jigsaw puzzle'.[530] As mentioned in Chapter 4, Chinese flows have generated heated debates and speculations, depending on

[527] For Colombia, see https://www.apccolombia.gov.co/rendicion-de-cuentas. For Mexico, see https://infoamexcid.sre.gob.mx/amexcid/ccid2013/home.html (last access: 22/08/2020).

[528] Sun's (2019) op-ed substantiate this point by showing that in China's 2014 White paper the amount spent between 2010-2012 was around 4.6 billion USD per year. MOFCOM foreign aid budget for 2019 was approximately US$2.63 billion. The online document with CIDCA budget for 2019, originally available at http://www.cidca.gov.cn/2019-04/02/2019bmys.pdf, was not available in September 2020.

[529] Kitano's (2018, 50) estimate 'draws on budget data from the websites of 50 departments and from other relevant organisations within China, as well as from other relevant sources of information'. According to the Japanese scholar, this estimate varies from the Chinese government's official figures and other estimates due to its 'practical definition of China's foreign aid', introducing the concept of net and gross disbursements of foreign aid (net and gross foreign aid), 'in a way that is as comparable as possible to that for the net and gross disbursements of ODA. Secondly, the estimate includes multilateral aid within the total aid; and thirdly, disaggregated department-level budget data sets are used to estimate grants and interest-free loans as well as multilateral aid' (ibid).

[530] Similarly, the German Sinologist Marina Rudyak in her blog *China Aid* describes her effort as 'peering into the black box of Chinese aid'. See http://china-aid-blog.com/ (last access: 27/10/2020).

the definition (what counts as IDC/SSC) and on the counting methodology used.[531] At times, as in the 2014 White Paper, Chinese official figures for flows between 2001-2013 were significantly larger than what some externals were able to count, leading to a question about China's potentially strategic use of figures to 'assert dominance' in the aid system (Sears 2019, 141) or simply not releasing parts of its data to the public, thus making external measures to underestimate the total flows.[532] In others, official figures have been smaller than external estimations, prompting scholars like D. Zhang (2017, 751) to argue that understating is driven by an intent by the Chinese state 'to pacify domestic concerns'.

Assessments on the available data also vary. In its *Aid Transparency Index*, PWYF has constantly ranked MOFCOM's disclosure as 'very poor' since the data was not published in the *IATI Standard*.[533] The American Sinologist Jonathan Hillman, echoing many Western commentators, is also convinced that 'opaqueness is an in-built feature of the BRI' (The China Africa Project n.d.). Others, including my Chinese interlocutors, have alternatively indicated that data availability increased in the last years and that China's development banks have progressively aligned with overall international standards on disclosure (I. Mitchell, Ritchie and Rogerson 2020), though remaining 'too general'[534] and in an aggregated format that does not offer, for instance, annual country-based data.[535]

Many experts believe that greater official reporting on flows could strategically benefit China. Many also agree that the 'lack of transparency on the part of China's authorities has encouraged "China bashing"' (Paulo and Reisen 2010, 538) and that greater transparency could benefit China's diplomatic efforts, debunking some of the myths surrounding its development cooperation (Bräutigam 2009; Sears 2019). For Jiang (2019, 54): 'In light of the existing bias, and in order to change this grim portrayal of Chinese companies, more evidence-based study is needed'. Others highlight the benefits of communicating what China does globally to domestic audiences (UNDP China 2017) and its instrumental value for relations with 'borrowing countries' (de Oliveira and Jing 2020).

Though agreeing with certain potential benefits, my Chinese participants have signalled numerous uncertainties and challenges that expanding SSC quantification and/reporting exercises face in China. First, the technical challenges of China's aid system fragmentation; with several ministries and companies acting as implementing actors and competition between them on whether and how to report (Grimm et al. 2011;

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[531] *AidData*, for instance, has developed a methodology in which it categorises China aid flows in three categories: a) Official Development Assistance – ODA (concessional in terms, respecting the minimum of 25% grant element, and primarily intended for development and welfare); b) Other Official Flows – OOF (non-concessional in terms and primarily intended for commercial or representational purposes); and c) Vague Official Finance - Vague OF (clearly official finance, but insufficient information to assign to either ODA or OOF). See https://www.aiddata.org/china-official-finance (last access: 08/09/2020).

[532] For a discussions on the politics of counting China's aid, see Sears (2019) and I. Mitchell, Ritchie and Rogerson (2020).

[533] According to the last PWYF Index (2020, 19), 'China made very little information available about its aid activities or policies, and so was ranked at the bottom of the Index for the second time running'. For more on the Index, see Chapter 3.

[534] INT-CH-5.

[535] An observation that had been made by Grimm et al. (2011) almost a decade ago.

Sears 2019). As examined previously, bureaucratic politics shape quantification efforts in Brazil and India, as much as it does in DAC-donors like the US and the UK. Second, and this time more China-specific, the political and geopolitical challenges. These include the structural limitations of China's political system to such transparency exercise, as well as the risks of increased publicity generating new pressures from partner countries that compare the share, rates and deals they negotiate to those got by other countries (The China Africa Project n.d.).[536] Development experts in China believe that data-gathering for management will continue to happen but, unlike their Brazilian peers, they are not convinced that publicity is important or useful. According to one scholar:

> *At a macro-level, analysis is important to know how much cooperation goes where. But publication is another matter (…) The Agency* [CIDCA] *has some data, but I am not sure they will expand the data collection. And I am even less sure about the publication. The government will decide whether this is necessary or not. There is no consensus even within our own team about the need to be public. We have different views.*[537]

It is clear, nonetheless, that the government is already strategically practicing transparency and using its own kind of reporting to further advance an autonomous Chinese narrative over its flows (and outcomes) and thus dispute global narratives around its SSC practices.[538] Communicating SSC is also increasingly important to create a domestic constituency for China's *Going Out* (UNDP China 2017; Custer et al. 2019), even if social pressure will remain bounded by the characteristics of China's non-electoral democracy setting. Such a growing domestic constituency within academia and civil society has showed not only interest in the topic but also willingness to work 'constructively' to provide knowledge for the state to plan the expansion of BRI and assist the state in improving existing policy, legal and/or regulatory frameworks and 'bettering' Chinese projects delivery (Ma 2018; Yeophantong 2020; also Chapter 7).[539]

China's strategic collaboration with traditional donors, as discussed above, is another important factor in explaining the growing, yet still controlled, use of certain development cooperation reporting practices. One scholar summarised China's approach to the issue as follows: 'If it thinks it can get more from the partnerships with developed countries by being transparent, it will do'.[540] Such pragmatism is coherent with China's broader aid policymaking dynamics in the past years, one that 'gradually learns from and cooperates with the international norms to become more transparent and more modernized, while it reiterates and strengthens the role of tradition, ideology, and Chinese characteristics' (Shi, Chen and Hoebnik 2016, 45).

[536] INT-CH-4.
[537] INT-CH-5.
[538] The recent Covid-19 pandemic outbreak provides an additional example of Chinese state willingness to deploy diplomatic efforts to counter narratives that denounce China's lack of transparency, in this case related to its management of the outbreak, and at the same time to showcase China's commitment to fulfilling its responsibilities towards global development and expanding its SSC (Tian 2020).
[539] INT-CH-8; INT-CH-1; INT-CH-6.
[540] INT-CH-5.

Such a strategic take on transparency—a publicity that can operate favourably to debunk myths, show compliance with certain international standards and expectations, or improve performance on the ground—might not translate into full normative commitment to 'aid transparency' under the open government paradigm that infused *Aidland* in the past decades but show ways in which transparency can be claimed, disputed and practiced in China's development engagements in its own terms.

Lastly, it is important to locate the current SSC transparency dynamics in the broader context of domestic accountability politics in China. Governance, participation and transparency reforms have significantly shifted the Chinese landscape in the past decade, most notably at the local level and in legislative matters (Stromseth, Malesky and Gueorguiev 2017). Alongside Xi's anti-corruption campaign, notably targeting local authorities, growing environmental activism, the surge in online activism by 'netizens', and the reforms on administrative accountability in the aftermath of particular health crisis (including the 2003 SARS outbreak)[541] are also important features of the domestic public sphere. Together they have fostered new forms of 'publicity-driven accountability dynamics' (Distelhorst 2012; X. Wang et al. 2020) and pressured for accountability 'from below', even if bounded by the limits afforded to political participation in contemporary China (G. Yang 2006; Ho and Edmonds 2008; Chatelard, Audin and Daniel 2018).

Governance reforms will continue to affect the prospects of this agenda in the future. Some form of participatory policymaking in China is already happening within the foreign aid sector, though limited to a very small group of development experts and practitioners. The government hosted a round-table with a dozen of selected aid experts, in 2019, on the new Agency and also virtual consultations on certain aspects of CIDCA's legal framework (Sun 2019).[542] These 'invited participation dynamics', borrowing from Gaventa's (2006) typology, are incipient but important signs of China's development cooperation evolving in and responding to more domestically competitive settings and greater interest in the agenda, not only from state institutions but also from experts outside the state.

While the ways these multi-layered governance reforms affected the dynamics examined here are not straightforward, they certainly contribute to the *intermestic* dynamics that shape the accountability politics and reforms observed in the sub-field of SSC. Similar to Brazil and India, external factors, including the nature of the interaction between China's 'SSC policy communities' and a range of international stakeholders have played an important role not only in exposing Chinese stakeholders to existing norms and ways of working but also opening venues for a broader range of actors in China to critically engage with official SSC practices and formulate their own solutions to the accountability problem.

[541] SARS stands for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and is viral respiratory disease, associated with a type of coronavirus. The outbreak hit China and other four countries in 2003 and was considered by the World Health Organisation the first severe and readily transmissible new disease to emerge in the 21st century. See https://www.who.int/health-topics/severe-acute-respiratory-syndrome#tab=tab_1 (last access: 30/11/2020).

[542] INT-CH-5; INT-CH-4; INT-CH-16; INT-CH-17. Documents made available for consultation include the *Draft Foreign Aid Management Methods* (in 2019) and the *Administrative Measures for Foreign Aid Technical Assistance Projects* (in 2020).

Conclusion

This chapter examined how SSC accountability has been problematised and negotiated within India and China. The analysis sought to unpack two main aspects: first, how the need to measure and publicise SSC flows and results became a problem to be acted upon and how domestic publics negotiated domestic solutions to it. Second, what other SSC accountability issues have emerged as public and/or expert debates in each country. While doing so, I have paid attention to the interplay between domestic politics of foreign policy in India and China (including bureaucratic politics and state-society relations) and emerging understandings, disputes and negotiations over measurement and other SSC-related accountability as public/policy problems.

Examining the Indian landscape, I argued that accountability dimensions of Indian SSC engagements have been object of little domestic problematisation. An exception is the case of India's Exim Bank, which has generated interest and pro-accountability mobilisation from different domestic constituencies. Reflecting on the recent changes to India's LOCs scheme, I argued that, alike in the Brazilian BNDES case, the materiality of South-South development finance (in terms of resources invested and potential impacts on the ground) matters: it galvanises domestic attention, creates opportunities for wider policy debates and contributes to generating accountability reforms. In the case of LOCs, reforms have been driven mostly by a combination of market-driven accountability dynamics and concerns with the reputation and diplomatic costs of poor delivery on the ground.[543]

Contrasting with the will to reform LOCs, and with India's own knowledge entrepreneur role on SSC measurement issues globally, I found that measurement has generated few domestic disputes, negotiations and policy-institutional experimentation. Unlike in Brazil and China, Indian governmental and quasi-governmental actors, like RIS, found little need to translate its diplomatic activism in experimenting with measuring SSC within India. There are signs of growing engagement with the topic, both within RIS and the MEA, but still in an incipient and controlled manner. Citizens, media and CSOs' demands for the Indian government to explain or justify its development cooperation remained small enough for the MEA to keep an indefinite postponement strategy at home.[544] Hence, measuring 'from below', by civil society, has partially filled this role of experimenting with measuring SSC. Efforts remain, nonetheless, bounded by the mediation of RIS and by the limited interest (or capacity) among national groups to mobilise around the 'Global India' agenda or around perceived technical issues such as measurement. These dynamics are not unrelated to an increasingly restrictive public space for critical engagement on state policies within India, which includes new restrictions for the voluntary sector to operate, growing media censorship, and lack of funds for research and media reporting *in loco*.

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[543] INT-ODP-5.

[544] INT-IN-18.

To understand the Indian landscape, therefore, is important to locate SSC within contemporary domestic politics of foreign policymaking. Shaping these dynamics, and the very possibilities to request explanations and dispute policy priorities, there are: India's strong sovereignty government-to-government arguments framing and justifying its SSC; a resilient pan-partisan agreement on the role development cooperation can play in Indian rise as a great power; growing assertiveness by the BJP-led coalition to forge an Indian great power identity in opposition to the West and to China; the lack of infrastructure and personnel in the MEA/DPA to advance consolidation reforms; the nature of Indian SSC implementers leaning towards private companies rather than state agencies; and the limited—and often-mediated spaces—for policy dialogue and participation in foreign policymaking.

The Chinese case shows a different domestic landscape. Greater politicisation of China's development cooperation at home and abroad, and growing pressure on powerholders to explain and justify policies and practices to both external and domestic publics, has led to increased internal bureaucratic and academic thinking on what accountability means to China's development footprint, how to practice it and to whom. On the one hand, international social pressure came from the 'traditional' development apparatus, from Southern partners and their societies, and from lingering 'bad press'. On the other, growing domestic mobilisation within the political system and 'aid/SSC bureaucracies' have generated particular responses from the Chinese side. These include more assertive diplomacy to counter negative narratives of Chinese global development initiatives and build a responsible global image, as well as policy and managerial changes to make China's overall global footprint 'greener' and to 'modernise' development initiatives, including through management (accountability) reforms.

China has increased its dialogue with international actors, to selective and pragmatically draw-lessons and borrow from existing global practices. At the same time, management pressures, from within, for improving the performance of 'aid/SSC bureaucracies' contributed to the shifting institutional landscape within China. While also not subjected to classic *Aidland's* pressures to document the development cooperation enterprise to justify it, the exposure of the Chinese SSC portfolio, tighter hierarchical managerial dynamics and growing domestic anxieties with Chinese development have, nonetheless, created the will to engage with issues of accountability and measurement. From increasing publicity around SSC flows to piloting SSC evaluations, cautious experimentation has been China's main strategy to negotiate its own ways of doing and practicing accountability and responding to the mounting competing expectations, both internal and external, on its global development engagements.

7. Mobilising for accountability: politicising South-South cooperation 'from below'

This last empirical chapter discusses the dynamics of social mobilisation and accountability claim-making 'from below' in the context of South-South cooperation.[545] It complements the kaleidoscopic panorama of problematisations of and negotiations over SSC accountability depicted so far by bringing to the forefront questions of social accountability and state-society relations in the context of SSC policymaking in Brazil, China and India.[546]

Social accountability refers to the ways citizens demand and forge alternative citizen-led forms of participation and political control over state action, policies and/or practices (Newell and Wheeler 2006; Fox 2007a; Fontaine et al. 2016). My focus in this chapter is the *SSC accountability-related mobilisation* by Brazilian, Chinese and Indian civil society actors in domestic and transnational arenas, the framings and repertoires used, and the issues citizen-led action brings to the forefront.[547] In this chapter I investigate, first, the *problematisations* of SSC accountability 'from below' by what Hill (2003) categorised as 'interest' or 'pressure groups' in civil society (including social movements, NGOs and knowledge actors) engaged in SSC-related political and/or policy work in Brazil, China and India.[548] Second, I examine how accountability in/of SSC has been *negotiated* along the state-society axis in the three contexts.

This chapter advances three sets of contributions. First, I find that different civil society groups inside Brazil, India and China have engaged in accountability-based mobilisation—in a series of context-specific issues and with more or less explicit use of the polymorphous term 'accountability'—as a tool to engage state development cooperation policies and practices. While doing so, they constructed new sets of expectations on the role and responsibilities of SSC providers and on what 'good', 'just' and/or 'appropriate' development cooperation behaviour and policymaking are. Through mobilisation, moreover, civil society groups have contributed, in different forms and degrees depending on the country and the issue, to re-

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[545] The term 'from below' is used, echoing a vast scholarship on state-society relations, to characterise actions from actors in civil society. My use of the term draws on Della Porta et al. (2006) analytical proposition to study transnational social movements reimagining globalisation 'from below' and on Bond and Garcia's (2015) characterisation of citizen and popular action in the context of BRICS countries as 'the BRICS-from-below'.

[546] Several of the reflections in this chapter have been also published elsewhere. See Waisbich (2021) for an analysis of Brazilian civil society activism along the Brazil-Africa agenda; Waisbich (forthcoming a) for an analysis of civil society mobilisation from BRICS countries on the issue of the BRICS-led New Development Bank; and Waisbich (forthcoming b) on Chinese civil society mobilisation on Global China issues.

[547] This focus on mobilisation dynamics departs from other more policy-oriented 'pathways to accountability' studies that seek to understand the conditions under which citizen-led efforts *increase* or *improve* aid accountability (e.g. Gaventa and McGee 2013; Fox 2020). My approach here differ from these more evaluative studies and focuses instead on the intricacies and the sociopolitical dynamics of pro-accountability national and transnational mobilisation by civil society actors in Brazil, China and India (e.g. Fox and Brown 1998; Newell and Wheeler 2006; Joshi and Houtzager 2012).

[548] I am cognisant that this focus on organised groups in civil society is not exhaustive of the variety of state-society relations in the three countries, which also include other forms of popular politics and individual manifestations. These other forms, particularly citizens' online activism, are an important element in the Chinese landscape (Ma 2019; Waisbich forthcoming b), although not in Brazil or India, and will not be treated here.

politicising SSC inside the three countries while feeding into ongoing debates over SSC accountability taking place in global arenas.

Second, based on a range of mobilisation instances across the three countries, I find that problematisations of SSC accountability 'from below' have revolved around procedural and substantial issues, namely: (i) transparency of SSC engagements; (ii) participation in SSC policymaking and project-related decision making; and (iii) SSC providers' development cooperation models and their impacts on the ground, in particular how to make them greener and/or people-centred. While the first two were more frequent in Brazil and India, the third one is found in all three countries.

Third, as for the issues of contention and the civil society repertoires, my empirics show that mobilisation has been stronger in dimensions of the 'SSC compact' related to development finance for infrastructure building (in all three countries) and South-South agricultural cooperation (in Brazil and to a lesser extent in India). This thematic concentration responds to the materiality and political visibility of development banks and state-business alliances inside SSC providers, the contentious nature of land issues in the Global South, and the pre-existing domestic and transnational networks of activism around these topics. In the case of China, the environmental impact of country's global development engagements has been the most salient contentious issue, enabled by the importance of environmental activism inside China, the expanding 'Ecological Civilisation' rhetoric under Xi Jinping, and growing transnational networks monitoring China's 'ecological footprint' in infrastructure projects.

I also find that while some specific projects have generated cross-regional campaigns, intense mobilisation has taken place at the policy-level, at home, in an attempt to shape and/or contest rising powers' identities as 'development cooperation providers' and to influence policy priorities and guidelines ahead of paradigmatic 'problematic projects'. Campaign-like mobilisation to challenge particular initiatives therefore coexisted with attempts to reform state SSC policies and advocate for greater accountability in more institutionalised ways. As a consequence, civil society repertoires varied across a continuum of 'insider-outsider' mobilisation strategies and 'collaboration-confrontation' modes of engagement with 'SSC bureaucracies' and implementing actors, while having to reinvent strategies to engage Southern providers in the terms of their SSC initiatives. Both the collaboration and confrontation modes were clearly present in the Brazilian and Indian cases, but less so in China, where civil society actors mostly adopted non-adversarial, constructive, approaches.

The remaining of the chapter is structured as follows. The first section examines selected instances of pro-accountability mobilisations around South-South agricultural cooperation, the environmental footprint of Southern-led infrastructure building and Southern-led international development finance. Drawing upon these cases, in the second section I take a step back to characterise the emergence of 'SSC monitoring

movements' and the ways civil society groups have negotiated accountability and participation in the context of Brazilian, Chinese and Indian SSC.

Problematising accountability 'from below'

I start this section with a few words on my use of the term 'civil society'. Civil society—included alongside accountability in Cornwall's (2007) list of 'development buzzwords'—is commonly used as a proxy for a collection of non-state and non-market actors. According to Banks, Hulme and Edwards (2015, 708) civil society is 'the space in which people mobilize to bargain, negotiate, or coerce other actors in order to advance and promote their interests'. While the term is extensively present in Brazilian political and social thought since re-democratisation (e.g., Danigno 2002; Avritzer 2012; Lavalle et al. 2019), the concept has been more cautiously applied in the case of China (e.g., P. Huang 1993; Ho and Edmonds 2008; Gu, Chen and Haibin 2016) and more critically operationalised in India, for its inadequacy to describe the 'popular politics' (Chatterjee 2004)[549] and its overuse as a panacea for 'local and people-centred' development (I. Roy 2003; Narayanaswamy 2015). While referring to civil society here I am not oblivious to these debates and to the diversity of state-society relations across the three countries due to variations in political regimes and historical sociopolitical trajectories. I have nonetheless kept the term due to its wide use in development cooperation literature as well as for comparative purposes.[550]

I am also not oblivious to the rapidly shifting state-society dynamics across my research sites and its implications to mobilisation on the SSC agenda. This includes the ongoing re-configuration of the civic space, with Brazil and India moving towards more 'illiberal democratic' settings (Chacko 2018; Hunter and Power 2019). It also includes renewed forms of state control of society in China under Xi Jinping (Kuhn 2018), while allowing for a niche of non-for-profit groups to expand their work around China's *Going Out* agenda and to 'go out' and internationalise themselves (CDB 2015; Hsu, Hildebrandt and Hasmath 2016; Qiang 2019; Yeophantong 2020). In what follows, I discuss three selected instances of pro-accountability mobilisations by civil society groups in Brazil, China and India alongside their peers in other Southern countries and beyond.

[549] Chatterjee suggests the use of a third term, 'political society', which to him would be more consistent with the politics of the poor and applicable to understand claim-making and negotiation dynamics between marginalised groups and governmental agencies. The notion of 'civil society' is also illustrative of the kind of citizenship politics observed around Indian foreign policy, which remains at large the realm of what Chatterjee (2004, 67) described as 'modern elite groups', 'bourgeois society or bourgeois public sphere' or the 'small section of proper citizens'.

[550] Even in the Indian context, the term 'civil society' has been widely used in scholarly work to refer to the voluntary sector, social movements and/or non-state knowledge actors engaging with Indian development cooperation (e.g. Mawdsley 2014b; Mawdsley and Roychoudhury 2016; Poskitt, Shankland and Taela 2016; Pomeroy et al. 2016; Chenoy and Joshi 2016).

Challenging agricultural cooperation: The 'No to ProSavana Campaign'

The 'No to ProSavana Campaign' is one of the most widely studied cases of civil society contestation of a South-South development cooperation initiative (see Chapter 1). ProSavana is a triangular agricultural development cooperation initiative between Mozambique, Brazil and Japan that ran between 2009-2020.[551] ProSavana aimed at transforming Northern Mozambique savanna into a large-scale public-private agricultural productive zone (Santarelli 2016; Funada-Classen 2019),[552] with Brazil acting as provider of an 'appropriate', 'better-fit', subaltern technical tropical agriculture expertise and a source of foreign investment (Ferrando 2015; Shankland and Gonçalves 2016).

Not much after its official launch, ProSavana started to face opposition by civil society actors, starting with Mozambican peasants and activists. The mobilisation rapidly expanded from the local and national peasants' movements in Nampula and Maputo, led by the Mozambican National Union of Peasants (UNAC), to development, environmental and rights NGOs in Mozambique and beyond. Cross-regional linkages were forged with organisations in Brazil through the Brazilian NGO FASE, with transnational like-minded actors like *Via Campesina* and Friends of the Earth, and with aid watchdogs in Japan. Demands initially targeted the Mozambican government but quickly included Japanese and Brazilian governments as well (Aguiar and Pacheco 2016; Funada-Classen 2019).

While much of civil society anticipated fear never fully materialised,[553] the anti-ProSavana mobilisation became an emblematic case of 'pro-accountability mobilisation' regarding Brazilian SSC, through which cross-regional networks of activists have disputed the very content of a SSC initiative 'from below' and contested the ways Brasília designed its cooperation projects and justified its policy options to domestic constituencies (Cabral and Leite 2015; Durán and Chichava 2017; Horn 2018).

Lack of transparency and participation of affected communities were major issues from the start. Civil society groups denounced the absence of official communication on the project to local communities in Nampula and the mismatch between the information publicly available and what was being shared with potential investors (Shankland and Gonçalves 2016).[554] Transparency claims were used to highlight civil society, in Mozambique as much as in Brazil and Japan, will to participate in project design but also to dispute the meaning of South-South agricultural development cooperation. Lack of transparency

[551] On the formal end of ProSavana, see https://www.dw.com/pt-002/fim-do-prosavana-uma-oportunidade-para-o-desenvolvimento-agr%C3%ADcola-em-mo%C3%A7ambique/a-54339235 (last access: 04/09/2020)
[552] ProSavana drew on a previous Nipo-Brazilian programme in the 1970s, the *Proceder,* which helped turning the Brazilian *Cerrado* region into one a major agricultural commodities' production zone.
[553] Indeed the business component of the initiative slowed down before achieving its 'promised' outcomes (Baumert et al. 2019), partially because of the social mobilisation and partially because of changes in Brazilian investors' appetite amidst a financial crisis in Brazil, see Chapter 5.
[554] This mismatch was later confirmed by a leaked version of the Master Plan of ProSavana, rendered public in 2013.

reinforced, according to this script, other substantive concerns about ProSavana's agricultural transformation model, based on the fear of land displacement and resettlements. These fed into global policy debates on land-grabbing and the Green Revolution in Africa and on conflicting conceptions of agricultural development opposing family farming and agrobusiness on both sides of the Atlantic (Pierri 2013; Cabral et al. 2016; Milhorance and Bursztyn 2017). Claiming transparency was also important for activists to unveil a perceived 'state-capital nexus' behind the project and behind Brazilian SSC (Milhorance and Bursztyn 2017; Durán and Chichava 2017).

Faced with little by way of responses from the three governments, in 2014 activists escalated their demands and launched the 'No to ProSavana' campaign to end the initiative.[555] The campaign made use of a set of 'artifacts of contestation' (Shankland and Gonçalves 2016): public statements, videos, open letters, local and tri-continental civil society meetings,[556] street-protests in Mozambique, policy advocacy with Brazilian and Japanese cooperation agencies and field visits. Demands directed to the Mozambican government were largely framed around participatory decision-making, as to challenge governmental choices and dispute ProSavana's 'rural development goals'. In Japan, mobilisation was championed by aid watchdogs critical of JICA's role in promoting socio-environmental exploitation in Mozambique. Japanese NGOs were instrumental to obtaining access to internal documents on the project and share them with the counterparts in Brazil and Mozambique (Funada-Classen 2019).

In Brazil, the mobilisation was championed by FASE and other national development NGOs (many of which members of the Brazilian Network for Peoples Integration - REBRIP),[557] critical scholars, and agrarian social movements seeking to contest both the internationalisation of Brazilian agrobusiness and foster a debate around Brazilian SSC models more broadly.[558] Relying on certain levels of access to governmental and state institutions, at least until Rousseff's impeachment in 2016, Brazilian activists

[555] A Facebook community page for the Campaign can be seen at https://www.facebook.com/naoprosavana/about/?ref=page_internal (last access: 09/09/2020).

[556] The Triangular Peoples' Conferences took place in Maputo (in 2013, 2014, and 2017) and in Tokyo (2018). The third one, in 2017, for instance, gathered around 200 representatives of Mozambican, Brazilian, and Japanese social movements, NGOs and academics (No to ProSavana Campaign 2017).

[557] REBRIP was created in the 1990s as a network gathering NGOs, rural and urban labour unions, and social movements to represent people's voices in international negotiations, initially at the regional level and progressively global negotiations as well. REBRIP has worked on issues pertaining to regional blocs (to strengthen the Southern-cone regional bloc MERCOSUR and oppose the Free Trade Area of the Americas) as well as to trade and economic negotiations at the World Trade Organisation and the G-20. In the mid-2000s, REBRIP became an important Brazilian civil society voice in BRICS-related issues, leading the construction of people's summits in Brazil and joining the cross-regional coalition negotiating with the BRICS-led New Development Bank. Together with other self-identified leftist or progressive stakeholders REBRIP has championed participation issues within Brazilian foreign policy, in general, and many of its members have been among the strongest advocates for participation in development cooperation-related issues. For more on REBRIP and its members see http://www.rebrip.org.br/ (last access: 02/12/2020).

[558] An extended list of Brazilian organisations involved in the campaign can be found in the 2016 joint statement named, in Portuguese, *'Comunicado conjunto e questionamentos da sociedade civil de Moçambique, Brasil e Japão sobre o ProSAVANA com relação aos documentos do governo recentemente vazados'*, available at https://www.farmlandgrab.org/post/view/26458-comunicado-conjunto-e-questionamentos-da-sociedade-civil-de-mocambique-brasil-e-japao-sobre-o-prosavana-com-relacao-aos-documentos-do-governo-recentemente-vazados (last access: 23/11/2020).

secured meetings with ABC and were able to insert the issue in formal and institutionalised participation channels, such as the then National Council on Food and Nutritional Security (CONSEA).[559] CONSEA played an important role as an internal echo-chamber within the federal government, issuing a critical statement in 2013 and assisting CSOs in pressuring the Brazilian government for more information on ProSavana and for meaningful changes in the project set-up (Aguiar and Pacheco 2016).[560] CONSEA's participation, moreover, offered an institutional channel 'to take on the consequences of Brazil's SSC activities for poor and marginalized people overseas as a legitimate topic for debate' (Shankland and Gonçalves 2016, 43). While due to its consultative nature CONSEA had little leverage within the *Esplanada,* the mobilisation managed to 'name and shame' ABC and Embrapa and contributed to generating internal, albeit modest, accountability debates within these major 'SSC bureaucracies', as discussed in Chapter 5.[561]

Social mobilisation on and around ProSavana have brought about uneven, and often unclear, project and policy changes in the first years, between 2012 and 2014, but ultimately contributed to render ProSavana unsustainable. Some commentators highlighted immediate transparency and participation gains with the creation of a Civil Society Coordination Mechanism in Mozambique and of a ABC's envoy *in loco*.[562] Others highlighted broader agenda-setting and visibility gains—at the project level and at the SSC policy level in Brazil—on the contested nature of agricultural development cooperation (Cabral and Leite 2015; Horn 2018). While more optimistic observers credited the social mobilisation for halting the project (Funada-Classen 2019), in a more critical vein, Shankland and Gonçalves (2016) cautioned to the 'crisis-management' nature of certain accountability tools put in place and to the remaining tensions in the metamorphosed public version of the ProSavana project document that erased without fully replacing the agribusiness-driven focus of the project.

Understanding this mixed-bag of outcomes requires embedding ProSavana in the divisive nature of agricultural development in Brazil and Mozambique and the particular state-society dynamics in all three partnering countries. On the one hand, as the mobilisation evolved, collective action became more internally fragmented in Mozambique with different groups, in Maputo and Nampula, diverging on what should be the main goal and strategies of the collective action (Chichava and Alden 2017).[563] On the other, both the Brazilian and Mozambican governments adopted strategies to de-legitimise civil society activism. In Mozambique, NGOs were portrayed as foreign-driven, spreading public disinformation and/or playing the political opposition game (Santarelli 2016; Funada-Classen 2019). In Brazil, governmental reactions

[559] CONSEA was formally dismantled by Jair Bolsonaro in his first executive decree, in January 2019. Despite strong opposition in the Legislative and civil society, and attempts to revert the Presidential decree, CONSEA was never reinstated (I. R. R. de Castro 2019).
[560] INT-BR-27; INT-BR-50; INT-BR-10; INT-BR-53.
[561] INT-BR-64; INT-BR-2.
[562] At a symbolic level, in 2018, the Administrative Court of Maputo issued a ruling against the ProSavana Coordination Unit after a law-suit from the Mozambican Bar Association for violation of the right of information (Funada-Classen 2019).
[563] INT-BR-21; INT-BR-22.

included downplaying the political content of the mobilisation and the questioning of official agricultural development cooperation models, SSC policymaking dynamics and of Brazilian overall SSC policy coherence. Many in Brasília focused instead on the technical realm of the crisis, often referred to as a 'miscommunication issue' that escalated.[564] Many also believed the programme was object of a defamation campaign by opposing social forces in Brazil and Mozambique backed by 'traditional' donors who feared Brazil's competition in Africa.[565]

Interviewees further underscored the challenges faced in translating the project contestation into changes in the Brazilian SSC system and to country's South-South partnerships as a whole. Beyond a real allergy to the word 'ProSavana', the crisis has only indirectly contributed to institutional changes, learnings and/or accountability reforms within Brazilian 'SSC bureaucracies'.[566] As mentioned previously, both ABC and Embrapa were somehow institutionally impacted by the 'ProSavana crisis'. ABC, in particular, has undergone numerous management reforms in the last five years, which led among others, to the strengthening of its policy planning unit, the creation of a working group on M&E and to a consultative process to draft a Food and Nutritional Security Cooperation Strategy.[567] Notwithstanding the multiple factors that explain these reforms, is fair to assume that the anti-ProSavana transnational social mobilisation was among them, raising the domestic political costs of Brazilian development engagements abroad, at least for certain policy communities.

While the linkages between the 'ProSavana crisis' and SSC institutional reforms in Brazil are not always straightforward, the mobilisation has generated other effects worth highlighting. The first one is described by Durán and Chichava (2017) as 'politicisation effects', with the mobilisation increasing the visibility of the contested nature of agricultural development cooperation and prompting answerability: public figures in all three countries had to respond and launch more public consultations. A second effect relates to the 'thickening of civil society' (Fox 2007a) through the activation of transnational linkages around development cooperation involving 'old' (Japan) and 'new' providers (Brazil). In Brazil, scrutiny over country's SSC is deemed to have contributed to dismantling the 'insulation of cooperation from wider state-society dynamics' (Cabral and Leite 2015, 440) and to ongoing debates on the democratisation of Brazilian foreign policy and on the need for a fully-fledged national development cooperation policy. Cabral and Leite ponder, nonetheless, that the mobilisation lacked a broad basis of stakeholders. For them, even if the campaign managed 'to narrow the gap between Brazilian taxpayers and Mozambicans' (ibid, 439), narrowing the traditional IDC 'broken-feedback loop' (see Chapters 1 and 3), it remained small and restricted to a group of internationalised social movements and development NGOs. While agreeing with

[564] INT-BR-2; INT-BR-20.
[565] INT-BR-64.
[566] INT-BR-2; INT-BR-21; INT-BR-64.
[567] INT-BR-53; INT-BR-6; INT-BR-10.

the authors on the rapprochement effects, it is important not to overstate the taxpayers' dimension in this process. Rather, I contend, this transnational mobilisation created a crisis-like situation whereby certain CSOs could engage with the contradictions of Brazilian SSC, narrowing the gap *between activists* in both sides of the Atlantic and creating openings for politicising Brazilian SSC at home at a policy level, even if not necessarily at the taxpayers' level.

The problematisation of ProSavana 'from below' also made visible conflicting expectations of responsibilities in the context of Brazil's international development engagements. The first relates to notions of 'good', 'just' and/or 'appropriate' *development cooperation policy and policymaking*. As mentioned, fears around displacement and other negative socio-environmental impacts on Mozambican peasants have served as a mobilising tool for local and transnational civil society. At the same time, right-based framings of the problem (the 'right-to-know', 'right-to-participate' and 'right-to-food') were extensively adopted by activists because they resonated with existing state-society agreements in Brazil at the time around these rights and the role of the state in promoting them.[568] Transparency, participation, land and food security issues were also conducive to galvanize attention and solidarity from transnational activist networks and 'aid monitoring movements' and claim belonging, open/democratic policymaking and environmental justice.

The second expectation refers to *developmental models* being shared and exported through SSC. As suggested by Shankland and Gonçalves (2016), the ProSavana controversy highlighted the shortcomings of 'mythical imaginaries' of Brazilian agricultural transformation and 'shared landscapes' between Brazil and Africa. This is why an important dimension of CSOs mobilisation was about disputing evidence around agricultural transformation and questioning how much of the mythical narrative around the past successes of Brazil's own agricultural transformation was actually concealing past and present dispossession of Brazilian smallholders[569] and hence exporting these contradictions to Mozambique (Aguiar and Pacheco 2016; Santarelli 2016). When connecting dispossessions across the Atlantic, CSOs also disputed notions of 'SSC effectiveness', challenging officials to engage on what kind of development partner Brazil wanted to be. Critically, the ProSavana controversy gave content to growing perceptions of collusion between Brazilian technical cooperation and private interests (Leite et al. 2014; Zanini 2017; Dye and Alencastro 2020). This nexus was something Brazilian activists were willing to dispute because, unlike India and China, in the early

[568] Brazil developed throughout the 2000s a Food and Nutrition Security policy system backed by a strong legal framework, which included having the right to food constitutionalised in 2010. As for the right to information, in 2011 the country approved its Access to Information Law and started to champion a range of open government initiatives, both domestically and globally.

[569] An important issue already at the time, and even more so in the more recent years, was the continuous agricultural expansion of soya production into other Brazilian regions, including in the *Cerrado* portion of the states of Maranhão, Tocantins, Piauí, and Bahia (known as MATOPIBA) and in the Amazonian forest (Catsossa 2019).

2010s the Brazilian government was not openly favouring the participation of the private sector in its development cooperation, a dimension that remains unsolved until the present days.[570]

The third expectation relates to appropriate *rising powers' behaviour in development cooperation*. In many ways Brazil, more than Japan, was at the core of the accountability calls. The global visibility of ProSavana as 'a Brazilian SSC crisis' leaves open a set of questions on the politics of accountability in/of triangular cooperation, on differential responsibilities among partners and on the strategies of contestation chosen by different actors. Was Brazil playing a more important role in ProSavana implementation during the initial years and thus subjected to greater scrutiny? How much has the official narratives around the 'shared landscapes and trajectories' between Brazil and Mozambique safeguarded Japan from being the (main) target of accountability calls, despite its key role as a funding source? Were calls more strongly directed to (or felt in) Brazil because of the emerging divisive expectations across state and societal actors towards the country's rising power status? The next cases shed light onto some of these issues, while bringing new ones to the fore.

Challenging China's global environmental footprint: embedded activism and missing linkages

This sub-section discusses problematisations of accountability 'from below' in the context of China's overseas infrastructure building. While scholarship on civil society contestation of China-funded/built infrastructure projects in the Global South has flourished in the last decade (e.g Mottet and Lasserre 2017; S. Moyo, Jha, and Yeros 2019; Yeophantong 2020), fewer studies have unpacked Chinese and China-based activism (exceptions include Poskitt, Shankland and Taela 2016; Hsu, Hildebrandt and Hasmath 2016).[571] My findings contribute to this less explored dimension in three ways. First, I find that ongoing reforms of China's aid system—including greater policy guidance for overseas investments, the creation of CIDCA and growing 'multilateralisation' of China's development cooperation (see Chapter 6)—have offered greater political, symbolic and material opportunities for activists inside and outside China to mobilise around accountability issues. Second, that environmental activism has been the most accessible 'entry-door' for CSOs to engage the state and Chinese companies and to influence (if not resist) projects. Third, that groups within China have engaged the state and companies through what Ho and Edmonds (2008) called 'embedded activism', seeking to partner with Chinese actors acting overseas and co-construct or change policies and practices from 'within', in a conflict-avoiding manner.

Public debates are mounting inside China on country's *Going Out* strategy and its global developmental role and footprint. The internationalisation of the Chinese state and companies has multiplied the number of

[570] INT-BR-44; INT-BR-3; INT-BR-47.

[571] 'China-based' organisations refers here to the range of INGOs that have offices and/or branches in mainland China or Hong Kong, including the major environmental NGOs (like WWF, World Resources Institute, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth) and the major development INGOs and foundations (including Oxfam, Asia Foundation, Ford Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates, among others).

domestic actors, including CSOs and other interest groups, seeking to influence policies and practices. Greater interest is reflected in the growing number of state and non-state media outlets reporting on global development issues, particularly around high level events like the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and on high profile initiatives such as the BRI (Xinhua 2018; Ma 2018; 2019). Examples of non-state reporting include the business-focused Caixin Global, critical independent 'non-adversarial' coverage of global development issues (Ma 2018)[572] as well as civil society initiatives, like the trilingual China Dialogue, reporting on China and the environment.[573] Social media activism by 'netizens' has also expanded in the past years, notably around these same high profile events (Ma 2018).[574]

In her piece on China's dam-building in the Mekong region, Yeophantong (2020, 87) argued that China's growing role in hydropower development has generated an 'evolving regional public sphere' where local civil society organisations create their own 'autonomous spaces' for participation or ask for the creation of 'invited spaces', along Gaventa's (2006) typology, to exert influence on China's government and companies. Here I suggest that there are signs of a similar processes taking place within China, in which civil society groups (including NGOs, independent communication vehicles, think tanks and academics) are crafting ways to discuss and influence country's global development exchanges. Despite the existing restrictions to political activism and public expression, spaces for participation have expanded in the context of China's *Going Out* and, in different ways, provided local civil society actors with a range of new political, symbolic and material opportunities and resources to act (Waisbich forthcoming a).

A noticeable source of SSC-related mobilisation within China has been environmental activism. The environment is one of the earliest and most active areas of civil society in modern China (Ho 2008). Environmental issues have grown as a relatively politically-safe issue for groups to mobilise around: 'acceptable until you hit some boundaries', as framed by one interviewee.[575] Ho and Edmonds (2008) defined contemporary environmental activism in China as 'embedded activism': a 'nation-wide, voluntary collective action with less risk of social instability and repression at the hand of the governing elite' (Ho 2008, 2). Embedded activism is characterised by self-imposed censorship and a conscious de-politicisation of environmental politics, as well as by the use of non-confrontational strategies and of partnering and informally networking with Party and state officials. According to the authors, not only has embedded activism allowed the environmental movement to survive and expand in China but it has also provided the basis for incremental political changes in China.

[572] An example of this reporting on FOCAC can be found in Teng (2018). For more on 'constructive journalism' in China, see The China Africa Project (n.d.).
[573] China Dialogue project (https://www.chinadialogue.net/) has articles available in Mandarin, English, and Spanish. Another source for critical discussion on China's overseas development initiatives with attentive eyes to environmental issues is the English-language *Panda Paw Dragon Claw* blog (https://pandapawdragonclaw.blog/).
[574] INT-CH-7; INT-CH-3.
[575] INT-CH-7.

These changes can be seen in the ways the Chinese Communist Party has made environmental sustainability—or at least some aspects of it, such as air pollution and renewable energy—a priority (Barbieri 2018; H. C. Li 2019). In 2012, Xi erected the 'Ecological Civilisation' as one of the pillars of Chinese developmental agenda, and, in 2018, the term was included in China's constitution. In 2020, Xi announced China's commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. There is, therefore, an increasing concern within China with transitioning towards a green economy, making the country a world leader on green finance and on renewable energy technologies.

The Party desire to pursue a 'green leadership' has generated new opportunities for national civil society groups to engage state institutions (like the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission), business associations (such as the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Metals, Minerals and Chemicals Importers and Exporters) and companies operating abroad on these issues, on an issue-specific basis or through multi-stakeholder platforms like the 'Green BRI'.[576]According to my research participants, the Party interest in and commitment to the agenda further made international environmental norms and standards more palatable to the Chinese actors operating abroad than other international issues, related to labour or human rights, for instance.[577]

At the same time, environmental issues have also gained prominence in the international development realm, with the Agenda 2030 and the climate emergency, creating new transnational political opportunity structures, following Tarrow's (2001) framework, for independent think tanks, development and environmental organisations (like the Beijing-based Greenovation: Hub – GHub, the Global Environmental Institute – GEI, or the Yunnan-based Green Watershed), and China-based INGOs (including WWF, Greenpeace or Oxfam Hong Kong) to mobilise on environmental and climate change issues in a non-confrontational way.

By working with state institutions and business associations to improve overseas investment policies, guidelines and the performance of Chinese companies, organisations have found a circumscribed but growing space to problematise China's SSC and the inconsistencies between its 'green rhetoric' and practices.[578] In their influencing endeavours, some groups (like GEI or The Asia Foundation) decided to act 'constructively', as framed by one interviewee,[579] to help Chinese companies with Corporate Social Responsibility-like arrangements and engagement with local communities. Others, alternatively, decided to do advocacy with the banking sector and with sectoral business associations in Beijing to improve regulations on outward investments or help to mitigate financial and reputational risks of overseas projects.

[576] See https://green-bri.org/ (last access: 27/08/2020).
[577] INT-CH-1; INT-CH-12; INT-CH-15.
[578] INT-CH-1.
[579] INT-CH-7.

GHub, for instance, has developed, in partnership with the German Böll Foundation, their own 'Environmental Risk Management Manual for China Overseas Investment' (GHub 2019).

Representatives of Chinese and China-based organisations interviewed were well aware of the potentialities but also the limits of using conflict-avoiding or even business-friendly environmental activism to partner with 'reformers' within state institutions and companies. These limits materialise, for instance, in the challenges to engage in the required technical financial terms or in insufficiencies of promoting a 'green agenda' that overlooks social issues, including resettlement and indigenous peoples' rights.[580] CSOs were also aware of the incremental nature of their embedded activism. They recognise the new governmental regulations are mostly non-compulsory/voluntary recommendations and do not provide local communities with access to legal remedies (Garzón 2014; Chun Zhang 2017).

They also recognise, echoing existing critical scholarship on development accountability (e.g. Newell and Wheeler 2006; Joshi and Houtzager 2012), their activism as mainly 'mechanism-driven' and geared towards the adoption of formal policy-legal changes and tools, often overlooking their implementation challenges at the project level. Changing power relations on the ground would require Chinese organisations to forge more linkages with other activists working outside China and to play a more active role in transnational networks, helping others to navigate Chinese systems and actors (Waisbich forthcoming b). However, growing these South-South linkages between critics in China and those mobilising at the projects-sites are not always assured, as I discuss next while examining the case of the China infrastructure building in Lamu, Kenya.

The case of Lamu illustrates a transnational campaign against China-funded infrastructure project without the participation of Chinese civil society and thus offers insights on some of the present opportunities and limits of collective action in the context of China-funded/built projects. In 2014, the Kenyan government launched a project to build Kenya's first ever coal-powered plant in the Lamu County. The bid was won by a consortium of Kenyan and Chinese energy and investment firms, led by Amu Power Company, with financing coming from the Industrial Commercial Bank of China. Later, the project also received financial support from the African Development Bank (AfDB) and from Amu's shareholders.[581] Planned near a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the plant was quickly contested by national and transnational civil society activists. Among the many strategies employed, a group of local community and environmental activists, led by the Save Lamu and the Kwasasi Mvunjeni Farmers Self-Help Group, together with national and international organisations such as Greenpeace and Accountability Counsel, filed a lawsuit with the Kenya's National Environment Tribunal. Their petition challenged the lack of consultations, the quality of the

[580] INT-CH-1; INT-CH-7; INT-CH-8.

[581] As the project unfolded, the plant owner, Amu Power Company, became a Kenyan, Omani, US. and Chinese consortium, with the US-based General Electric buying 20% stake in the plant, in 2018 (Ochieng and Olingo 2019; Ullman 2019).

environmental impact assessment done in the project approval phase, and the environmental risks the project would entail if completed (Obura 2019; UNEP 2019).[582] In June 2019, Kenyan judges revoked the company's license to build the plant and, in November, following the growing pressure by environmental groups, AfDB pulled out, bringing the project to a halt.[583]

The so far successful mobilisation on the Lamu coal-power plant offers some insights on pro-accountability social mobilisation dynamics on and around Chinese infrastructure investments overseas. First, on the so-called 'success factors', the case highlights the role of national actors and institutions in the host country in contesting a social-environmentally controversial project and forcing governmental actors to reconsider policy priorities.[584] It also signals the opportunities given by co-financing arrangements involving Chinese and multilateral financers in multiplying pressure points for activism and ultimately help steering China away from environmentally damaging projects.[585] A second insight is on the multidimensionality of Chinese global developmental role and impacts. In the last decade, Lamu has been a site for other forms of social contestation over China-Kenyan partnerships in the context of the logistical-development corridor connecting the Lamu port to other regions in Eastern Africa (Lesutis 2019; Chome et al. 2020). The port, built by Chinese contractors,[586] also sparked criticism of local communities and prompted an unsuccessful legal action against the Kenyan state due to forced resettlement of local communities and loss of traditional fishing rights, among others (Le 2016). Lastly, this case suggests some limits of replicability of the Lamu plant mobilisation to other China-funded/built projects. While the transnational mobilisation managed to halt the plant without fully engaging Chinese civil society—with Kenyan activists relying on other leverage points, including INGOs, multilateral and national courts—this might not be the case with other projects exclusively dependent on China's funding or impacting on issues with less political transnational appeal. The fate of the Lamu fishing community affected by the port and still battling for compensation is an example close-by (Business and Human Rights 2018).[587]

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[582] Groups also filed a complaint with the World Bank IFC alerting that Kenyan commercial banks funded by IFC have been contributing to the project as well. So far IFC has avoided any responsibility for the damages (Accountability Counsel 2019).

[583] For another setback following court rulings, this time involving Chinese projects in Peru, see Collyns (2019).

[584] The learning from this case, compiled by the multi-stakeholder 'Green BRI Initiative' is a sign of how controversies like this one can potentially feedback into future project and policy decision-making processes. Among the recommendations to Chinese investors, the authors of the report highlight that 'investors need to ensure that not only the government, but also the broader society supports the projects'. They also highlight that investors should adhere to international investment due diligence standards and other commitments, including UN SDGs and the Paris Agreement on combating climate change. See https://green-bri.org/kenyas-lamu-coal-fired-power-plant-lessons-learnt-for-green-development-and-investments-in-the-bri?cookie-state-change=1600781575123 (last access: 22/09/2020).

[585] From an environmental perspective, this can contribute to making harder for China to keep investing in coal-based solutions, and thus keep externalising its carbon footprint, and to creating more incentives for China to prioritise renewables in its overseas investments (Igoe 2018; Ma 2020).

[586] The port is funded by the Development Bank of South Africa and built by the China Communications Construction Company (Njunge 2019).

[587] Another example of complex responsibility chains is found in recent debates around China's investments in agricultural commodities, such as in soyabean crop production in countries like Brazil and the linkages with deforestation and climate change (Lazzeri 2019).

In sum, the ways in which environmental issues gained traction in China's SSC in the last years have allowed for certain accountability issues to be claimed and negotiated 'from below'. This was certainly the case of mobilisation around the 'ecological footprint' of China's development cooperation by some domestic actors in China (think-thanks, CSOs, academics). Their activism helps understanding growing debates and unfolding reforms in the environmental front rather than in other issues, such as transparency or the impacts of China's infrastructure building on land and livelihood dispossession elsewhere. Environmental accountability is a possible door through which civil society in and outside China's is problematising SSC accountability 'from below' despite its many challenges and embedded tensions.

Challenging Southern development finance: crafting new ways to mobilise around Southern-led development banks

Alongside China's overseas investments, Southern-led international development finance, more broadly, also became a problem for civil society actors within Brazil, China and India in the last decade. The rise in financial flows and projects funded by national development banks (including BNDES; Exim Bank of China and other Chinese policy banks; India Exim Bank) and the emergence of new Southern-led multilateral banks (the BRICS-led NDB and the China-initiated AIIB) prompted groups within rising powers to monitor and try to influence the policy and *modus operandi* of these financial institutions.

Here I discuss the transnational mobilisation around the New Development Bank, created in 2014 by the five BRICS countries, and headquartered in Shanghai, to fund 'sustainable infrastructure' in the Global South (NDB 2017). Using the case of the NDB, I discuss, first, how civil society actors from Brazil, China and India (together with counterparts in South Africa and beyond) attempted to challenge new Southern-led development banks. Second, how they have navigated the need to reinvent pro-accountability mobilisation strategies beyond the more classic approaches employed to engage with and campaign against traditional multilaterals, like the World Bank. Third, how, through a mix of contentious politics strategies (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tarrow 2001) and institutionalised forms of engagement (Lavalle et al. 2019), activists' interactions with the NDB and with national development banks, sought not only to resist to particular 'problematic initiatives' but also to contribute to the production of policies and agendas for Southern-led development banks.

In different ways and intensity levels, Southern-led development finance became problematic to national development, environmental and rights-groups in Brazil, China and India. National NGOs—particularly the more professionalised urban-based ones already mobilised on foreign policy and/or development cooperation issues—quickly identified existing and potential negative impacts of Southern development finance abroad and sought to forge formal participation channels and (critical) collaboration 'interfaces' (Pires and Vaz 2014) with these financial institutions.

In many ways, mobilisation on the BRICS-led NDB interacted and fed into existing (and emerging) advocacy work around the other banks (both the national development banks and multilateral ones, like the AIIB). National organisations were joined, and often supported, by INGOs based in the three countries and by transnational networks monitoring international financial institutions or the BRICS agenda.[588] In the case of Brazil, groups included Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Brasília-based development and rights-groups (like REBRIP, Conectas, Oxfam Brasil and Action Aid Brasil). In India and China, organisations (in their majority capital-based) included Oxfam India, Action Aid India, VANI, Centre for Financial Accountability, the BRICS Feminist Watch, GHub, WWF China, Oxfam Hong Kong and Greenpeace China. Most of these groups got together in loose networks, such as the BRICS Working Group inside the Coalition for Human Rights in Development and under the umbrella of existing BRICS-related civil society networks like the BRICS-from-Below and People's Forum on BRICS (Waisbich forthcoming a).

Unlike social contestation of the World Bank in the 1990s, where challenging negative socio-environmental impacts of operations on the ground preceded formal policy interactions with the bank (Fox and Brown 1998; Park 2019), in the case of NDB the opposite took place. The will to engage first as 'insiders' and 'critical collaborators' was based on CSOs' decades-long experience interacting a range of multilateral banks and by a growing *perception*[589] by activists of the strategic value of establishing institutionalised channels for critical dialogue with development banks led by their own governments in order to influence institutional settings and operations.[590]

To act as critical collaborators, national NGOs had to quickly—and not without tensions—adapt their long experience with demanding accountability from traditional multilaterals. This localisation, or 'appropriation' work (Anderl 2016), was essential in light of rising powers' transitioning from 'borrowers' to 'donors' in the global development finance realm. Translation meant changes in the mobilisation strategies and repertoires of collective action as much as in the issues raised and their framing. For that, groups had to reinvent transnational advocacy campaigns away from what most scholars understand as the North-South 'boomerang effect' (Keck and Sikkink 1998) and the 'case study campaigning' (Fox and Brown 1998) to the new context of Southern-led finance.

The 'theory of change' underpinning the classic model is that activists should create transnational networks of Southern and Northern-based organisations to campaign against 'problematic projects' funded by

[588] Among the INGOs one finds the Oxfam Confederation, Action Aid, Greenpeace, WWF, Friends of the Earth, International Rivers, Article 19, the Heinrich Böll Foundation, the International Accountability Project and Accountability Counsel. Among the transnational networks, one finds the Coalition for Human Rights in Development, the People's Forum on the Asian Development Bank and the People's Forum on BRICS.
[589] On civil society perceptions vis-à-vis international organisations opening-up, see Anderl et al. (2019).
[590] INT-BR-51; INT-BR-12; INT-BR-1; INT-IN-14; INT-OSS-10; INT-CH-1. Also Waisbich (2017). In the case of Brazil, an initial insider approach was also favoured by the political affinity that mobilised groups had with incumbents during the PT era (2003-2016), which faded away from 2016 onwards (Sierra and Hochstetler 2017).

multilaterals (and eventually halt them) and then use controversial projects as paradigmatic cases to feed their reformist agenda and policy advocacy work at the headquarters level.[591] The classic paradigm is also one where (often more radical) local voices in the South resisting projects on the ground were amplified (and often moderated) by other groups advocating in/from Washington or the European capitals (Covey 1998). Here, however, both the project and the funding decision-making sites were now located in Southern contexts, with no possible use of Western legislatures as pressure points (Babb 2009; Park 2019).

Mobilisation strategies had also to change because official understandings of accountability in Southern-led development finance was different. Western-led development banks have in the past decades— and due to increased pressure from inside and outside reformists—come to accept the idea of a responsibility to 'do-no-harm' and developed a set of operational guidelines, safeguards and independent accountability mechanisms to respond to affected peoples' concerns (Caitlin et al. 2016; Sovacool, Naudé Fourie and Tan-Mullins 2019; Park 2019). Southern development banks, alternatively, were willing to take a different route. Based on their past experiences as 'borrowers' and echoing longstanding concerns with sovereignty, development ownership, and autonomy in project-finance, both the NDB and the AIIB decided to mainstream the so-called *country systems' approach*,[592] where multilaterals rely on national legislation from the borrowing country in the context of their operations rather than on their own prescribed rules on financial management and environmental and social safeguards (Waisbich and Borges 2020; also Vazquez, Roychoudhury and Borges 2017; Conectas 2018b).[593]

Free from more robust 'do-no-harm' institutional frameworks, new Southern-led multilaterals posed challenges for civil society groups trying to replicate the classic framing of 'communities negatively affected by projects' that underpinned much of the transnational mobilisation around the World Bank and other anti-dam mobilisation since the 1990s inside Brazil and India (Park 2019; Atkins 2019). Under the *country systems' approach*, CSOs lacked important pressure points within the NDB and were left with less legal, para-legal and political entry-doors for challenging policies and operations. As a consequence, while engaging with the NDB, activists faced, not without frustration, the challenges of reinventing their own 'theories of change'. As put by an Indian activist:

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[591] This approach was somehow successful, for instance, in shifting the multilateral appetite for funding large dams in the late 1990s and early 2000s and has also contributed to important accountability-related institutional reforms in the World Bank, including with the creation of the Inspection Panel and the operational policies (information disclosure, sectoral policies, socio-environmental safeguards) (Fox and Brown 1998; Sovacool, Naudé Fourie and Tan-Mullins 2019).

[592] Since the early 2000s, the country systems' approach has been tested for procurement and in some 'less-risky' projects within the major multilateral development banks (OECD 2010; World Bank 2011; NDB 2017).

[593] An important factor in the successive reforms the World Bank Inspection Panel went through since its establishment has been the resistance to the Panel's role and authority by two kinds of stakeholders: management and larger borrowing states, including Brazil, China and India, against major donors' interests to use the Panel to hold management to account. Southern governments' trajectory of 'resisting' the Panel was mainly rooted on sovereignty concerns, arguing that the body was being used as a tool to investigate (and control) borrowers (Sovacool, Naudé Fourie and Tan-Mullins 2019).

Country-systems were a Southern agenda in Accra and Busan. But what have they done to it? They are just hiding behind it. They took just the sovereignty thing, but do not want to bear the costs of transparency, accountability, and civil society participation (…) They use country systems as an excuse. To shift from their responsibility.[594]

Ironically, as this new *modus operandi* became clearer to NDB's watchdogs, many which had opposed World Bank's top-down approaches towards Southern borrowers, called its safeguards perfunctory, and hailed BRICS for their transformative potential suddenly found themselves looking back with some nostalgia.[595] Their calls for the NDB to adhere to a minimum-denominator of existing international standards (e.g., Kaushik 2018) hoped to challenge the perceived 'race to the bottom' in terms of accountability standards and tools. This includes calls on the NDB to make project documents available, set-up civil society liaison focal points and consultation procedures, adopt socio-environmental benchmarks and operational safeguards to ensure 'doing-no-harm', and create accountability mechanisms where affected groups could file complaints and seek redress.[596]

Activists had then to find ways to discuss public responsibilities that would resonate with how BRICS countries conceived NDB's role and responsibilities. A similar effort also took place domestically vis-à-vis national development banks. Brazilian groups, for instance, negotiated with BNDES notions of a 'public bank with obligations towards the Brazilian society as well as the international community', considering both BNDES identity as an export credit-like agency activities (rather than a project loan bank) and the international legal transparency and socio-environmental standards to which Brazil adhered (Conectas 2018a).[597] This meant challenging BNDES initial use of state and bank secrecy provisions and references to the non-interference principle implying that the responsibility for eventual negative socio-environmental impacts was on the other Southern partner (Conectas 2014; Sierra and Hochstetler 2017; also Chapter 5), an understanding also shared by India's Exim Bank (see Chapter 6).[598] Groups in China also worked to localise understandings of global responsibility in the context of China's growing international development finance. Chinese NGOs used, for instance, country's commitments to fighting climate change as a sign of China's well-established global responsibilities that should guide the funding operations of national banks working overseas and the workings of China-led multilateral banks (GHub 2016).

Translation also happened at the tactical level and not without challenges. Since the BRICS countries started the preparations to set-up the bank in Shanghai, several CSOs from Brazil, China and India (as well as from

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[594] INT-IN-14.
[595] INT-BR-12; INT-BR-63.
[596] Examples of documents where CSOs raised these concerns include the Human Right Forum on ADB (2015) statement on AIIB's lack of safeguard, the position paper compiled by the Coalition for Human Rights in Development (2017) on NDB 2017-2021 Strategy, People's Forum on BRICS (2017) statement on the NDB, Vasudha Foundation paper on international best practices to be followed the NDB (Kaushik 2018), and the International Accountability Project advocacy paper on information disclosure (Sampaio 2019).
[597] INT-BR-12.
[598] INT-IN-13; INT-IN-17; INT-IN-15; INT-BR-11; INT-BR-25; INT-BR-38; INT-BR-56; INT-BR-70.

South Africa), opted for the 'insider approach': trying to create a space for political dialogue with the bank. The wrote policy reports and op-eds and tried to communicate and meet with the governmental representatives and with NDB management. With time, much of this critical collaboration work end up happening under the umbrella of the Coalition for Human Rights in Development. Others, however, preferred the 'outsider approach' of radical criticism, even hosting street protests against the bank. Some organisations, notably from Brazil and India, tried to do both (Waisbich forthcoming a).[599]

Transparency and participation featured among the issues prioritised by those who sought working with the bank during NDB's set-up phase and first operational cycle, until 2019.[600] NDB's overall transparency (i.e., disclosure policies and public availability of project documents) was perceived by activists as a tactical 'rally point' (Gheyle and Ville 2017)[601] and a 'low-hanging fruit'[602] to initiate the dialogue and enable other procedural and substantial issues, including participation in decision-making and negative impacts on local communities, to emerge.[603] Transparency was also useful to begin with considering that NDB operations and projects would take time to materialise on the ground.

As time progressed, however, and looking back to over five years of mobilisation, activists secured little beyond the dialogue channel and some modest transparency gains. Groups in Brazil, China and India could not steer the NDB towards establishing robust socio-environmental and gender policies to guide investments or operational guidelines to prevent and mitigate negative impacts on the ground. They also failed to make the bank explicitly move away from funding fossil fuels, coal and clean coal. Besides the gap between CSOs initial hopes and their own capacity to influence the NDB towards what they considered not only 'new' but also 'transformational' and thus 'better' development finance practices, activists also had to adjust their anticipated fear of damages and disasters on the ground. The reality by 2020 was that NDB projects were either inexistent, invisible or performing 'not that badly' (Waisbich forthcoming b).[604] The time-gap between pledges, commitments and disbursements; NDB's willingness to 'play safe' in the first years (Waisbich and Borges 2020); the use of financial intermediaries and co-financing; and the lack of information on how projects operated and performed on the ground (Kweitel, Toni, and Gordon 2017; Coalition 2017), made the bank difficult to track and almost *invisible* to outsiders.

[599] INT-BR-1; INT-IN-14; INT-IN-6. For an analysis of this diverging trajectories in the case of civil society mobilisation around the BRICS-led NDB, see Waisbich (forthcoming a).

[600] In 2020, the Bank has closed its first cycle, under the presidency of K. V. Kamath, from India, with the election of a new rotating president, this time a Brazilian national, for the upcoming cycle.

[601] This expression was coined in the context of transnational mobilisation dynamics in the context of the European Union to denote the use of transparency issues by social activists also as a way to express frustration over substance. A similar dynamic is also found in the case of ProSavana, discussed earlier.

[602] INT-BR-12; INT-BR-51; INT-BR-1.

[603] As discussed in Chapter 5, a similar dynamic was observed in the mobilisation around the BNDES (Sierra and Hochstetler 2017).

[604] The gap between the anticipated fear and reality is also highlighted by critical development scholarship in the context of emerging powers-Africa relations (Bräutigam 2009; S. Moyo, Jha and Yeros 2019).

This set of dynamics contributed to making the classic 'problematic case study' campaigning approach harder to replicate.[605] Low-intensity advocacy work on policy 'improvement' and 'betterment' exercises became the sole repertoire possible in a context where mobilisation was happening without visible 'crises', 'push-backs' and/or 'controversial projects' (in the words of my participants)[606] or without major negative impacts (i.e., socio-environmental disaster-like situations, evictions, resettlements and/or large-scale corruption). This scenario also made difficult for NDB-related mobilisation to attract support from other national groups (namely social movements and grassroots organisations) beyond the niche of professional NGOs already working on development finance and connected to transnational networks led by INGOs such as Oxfam, Action Aid or the Böll Foundation.[607] Absence of visible problems on the ground prompted some interlocutors to question whether civil society groups were 'making a mounting out of a molehill', as put by one interviewee.[608] Something another participant countered by stating: 'There might be no controversial projects. But there are things. They [the NDB] must seek abide by the higher standards. It is a new institution and there are standards: multilateral development banks' standards. There is no need to reinvent the wheel'.[609]

India is where these tensions played out more intensely. While candidly reflecting on the challenges to render India's South-South development finance flows visible domestically (both in the case of its LOCs and in India's role in the NDB and the AIIB), one activist pondered that: 'Unless there is a huge issue there: an environmental issue, a human rights violation, fishers in the Sundarbans are not an issue for elites. (…) Even the Communist Party sees it as a Bangladesh-India friendship thing'. His comments made a direct reference to a short-lived mobilisation to stop a LOC-funded coal-power plant in Rampal, Bangladesh, near the Sundarbans mangrove forest.[610] His account also highlights the implications of the existing pan-partisan nationalistic consensus on Indian South-South relations for grassroots groups trying to forge alliances— or 'coalitions of change' (Fox 2020)—within India to contest the fate of the poor and marginalised in India's partner countries.[611]

Finally, an additional challenge to increasing awareness around the (potential) downsides of Southern finance for infrastructure building. Mobilisation around the NDB was impacted by a decrease in the initial international attention (and sometimes even obsession) among 'traditional' donors and INGOs to the

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[605] INT-IN-14; INT-IN-20; INT-IN-6; INT-BR-40.
[606] INT-IN-20; INT-IN-6; INT-IN-10; INT-IN-14.
[607] INT-IN-14.
[608] INT-IN-20.
[609] INT-IN-6.
[610] According to Satish (2019), Indian contribution of US$1.62 billion counted for approximately 70% of the capital needed for the project. The project became controversial because the plant was to be located within 14 km of the Sundarbans, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Opposition came from local environmental groups and fisher communities as well as from experts fearful of India's financing fossil fuel exposure in times of reimagining carbon neutral futures (Satish 2019). See https://www.banktrack.org/rampal/ (last access: 27/08/2020).
[611] This challenge is not unique to the Rampal plant and was observed in the equally short-lived transnational mobilisation around Indian agricultural investments in Ethiopia (Mawdsley 2014b; also Chapter 6).

Southern BRICS' (Brazil, India, China and to a lesser extent South Africa) impacts in the field of global development (Muhr 2016; Bergamaschi, Moore and Tickner 2017). This is particularly visible in Brazil and India, notably since 2018, as a response to the somewhat official slowdown or withdrawal from the agenda in both countries. INGOs, such as Oxfam and Action Aid, but also the Böll Foundation—all three central nodes in the SSC-related activism—downsized their work on BRICS-related issues. In some cases, attention re-routed to China-only and to AIIB-only work.[612] Left with less external support to carry on their low intensity policy advocacy work around the NDB, watchdogs in Brazil, China and India are now entering a new mobilisation cycle while waiting for problematic projects to appear as to reactivate their transnational networks.

Negotiating accountability 'from below'

What can these instances of pro-accountability mobilisation illuminate in terms of current forms of negotiation over accountability in/of SSC taking place in Brazil, China and India? This section attempts to answer to this question locating what I labelled emerging 'SSC monitoring movements' and their negotiations over SSC within broader state-society dynamics in the context of foreign policy in the three countries.

Pro-accountability mobilisation and emerging social expectations on Southern providers

As argued in the accountability literature, negotiations between states and citizens over *rights and/or entitlements* to accountability (to explanations, justifications or redress) are necessarily constructed and negotiated. They reflect broader constructions of citizenship and the always evolving agreements on the contours of the social contract in a particular time and space (Grant and Keohane 2005; Hickey and King 2016; Waisbich et al. 2019). Negotiations also 'imply an agenda-setting power and a degree of authority to demand accountability from others' (Newell and Bellour 2002, 2). Development cooperation, and foreign policy more broadly, are policy fields with their own citizenship dynamics, their own forms of negotiated entitlements to explanations or redress, and their own *expectations* of 'good', 'just' and/or 'appropriate' state behaviour (Hill 2003; Eyben and Ferguson 2004; Rottenburg 2009; Milani and Pinheiro 2013). How these entitlements and expectations are currently being built in the context of SSC, reflects, on the one hand, the disputed and incomplete institutionalisation of SSC in a range of Southern providers (including Brazil, China and India). On the other hand, it also reflects the uneven and contested nature of development in

[612] INT-IN-6; INT-IN-10.

these Southern providers and the interconnectedness between expectations about the state role in promoting development at home and abroad (Waisbich forthcoming a).[613]

In the early days of SSC (re-)emergence, rising powers' global ambitious received strong support from several domestic publics, including rights-based and development CSOs, many of which hope rising powers' reformist diplomacies would/could foster global equity or that official claims about 'justice among states' would also translate into greater 'justice within states' (Mawdsley 2014a). However, as official SSC engagements increased and tensions and contradictions became more visible, this short-lived tacit agreement has started to coexist with more critical engagement, if not open resistance, by certain groups within civil society, with CSOs based in (or working on) rising powers being at the forefront of pro-accountability mobilisation to engage and contest SSC official policies and practices.

Emerging South-South cooperation monitoring movements

As SSC grew as a policy domain inside key Southern providers, civil society groups have come together—in more or less formal national and transnational networks—to influence SSC initiatives on the ground, shape the policy-institutional frameworks for managing and delivering SSC, and participate in policy debates around development cooperation and foreign policy. *SSC monitoring movements*, as I label them, emerged as an important actor in problematising accountability in/of SSC. They did so by building spaces for participation and spaces for contestation of policies and projects at the national and transnational levels (Pomeroy et al. 2016; Milhorance and Bursztyn 2017; Waisbich, Pomeroy and Leite forthcoming).

As shown in the previous section (and in previous chapters), 'SSC monitoring movements' across Brazil, China and India have made strategic use of 'jumping scales' (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Ferguson 2002; Tarrow 2005). They have joined existing global 'aid monitoring groups' as well as used the political opportunities provided by transnational networks to boost SSC/foreign policy-related advocacy at home. During the early 2000s, CSOs in Brazil, China and India have actively participated in global development debates (their role in the International CSO Steering Group of the Better Aid Platform in the 2008 Accra High-Level Forum being a good example of that).[614] Around the same time, some also turned to monitoring their countries' own foreign and development engagements abroad, benefitting from a surge in global attention to the so-called 'BRICS effects'. In countries like Brazil or South Africa, monitoring development cooperation also fed into growing domestic mobilisation around 'democratising foreign policy' (Nel and Van der Westhuizen

[613] Development and political theory scholarship have extensively underscored the importance of accountability discourses in the Global South and its close relation to development at home (Newell and Wheeler 2006; A. Gupta 2012; Isunza and Lavalle 2018). In particular, scholarship has highlighted different forms of social contestation towards development and improvement programmes using the language of 'unkept promises' and/or the 'language of rights' (Fox and Brown 1998; T. M. Li 2007; Anciano and Wheeler forthcoming).

[614] As many others in Asia, Africa and Latin America also actively participated in the construction of what would then become the 'Aid Effectiveness' debates, discussed in Chapter 3.

2003; Cabral and Leite 2015; Pomeroy and Waisbich 2019). Their activism, therefore, revolved around foreign policy as much as around development cooperation *per se*.

While monitoring SSC initiatives and their impacts on the ground, advocacy groups in rising powers, together with their counterparts in other Southern countries and beyond, have brought to the forefront challenges to policymakers of 'whose demands count' in the partnership, exposing tensions, factures and inconsistencies in SSC 'win-win' framings (Pérez 2013; Mawdsley and Roychoudhury 2016; Waisbich, Pomeroy and Leite forthcoming). Across the different mobilisation instances discussed earlier, civil society mobilisation has brought politics back to SSC by exposing the limits of what Rottenburg (2009) calls the 'official script' that, in the case of Southern providers, equated the differential nature of SSC vis-à-vis ODA with its alleged benign effects on the ground. In some cases, civil society mobilisation made visible the tensions between official South-South narratives around 'horizontality', 'cordiality', 'transferability' and their practical translations on the ground (Cabral et al. 2013; Shankland and Gonçalves 2016; Santarelli 2016). In others, society groups openly questioned rising powers' own domestic and exported developmental models, engaging in what Keck and Sikkink (1998) described as information, symbolic, leverage and accountability politics to challenge SSC socio-economic and environmental footprint as part of an interconnected discussion between development and dispossession at home and abroad.

By amplifying voices of those who defined themselves as 'negatively affected' by certain South-South initiatives, activists asked for 'democratic ownership' of SSC, discursively countering state-centred understandings of 'national ownership' in development cooperation.[615] By doing so, they positioned themselves in transnational arenas as critically engaging with both North-South and South-South cooperation (e.g., Southern CSO Alliance 2018). Crucially, rather than solely mimicking existing 'aid accountability' framings, repertoires and tools, Southern-based CSOs acting transnationally have generated their own forms of problematisation of SSC accountability. Their pro-accountability mobilisation 'from the South' and 'from below', created new network dynamics within existing global advocacy networks and new forms of global accountability politics. Their critique, 'from within' and 'from below', evoked a way of being in the world differently and doing SSC differently (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Daley 2019; Yeophantong 2020). Their activism, however, was also unavoidably caught in particular dilemmas of speaking 'from within', as discussed next.

[615] The call for 'democratic ownership' of aid has been a traditional stance of civil society networks in the context of the 'aid reforms'. For an example of this argument in the context of SSC, see CSOs Statement on South-South Cooperation, during the 2009 Nairobi conference, available in the 2010 Reality of Aid report (RoA 2010) and the statement by the Southern CSO Alliance (2019) in the context of BAPA+40.

The challenge to forge spaces of participation

As examined in Chapter 3, since the 1990s social mobilisation in 'traditional' donor countries, often in partnership with groups in recipient countries, have been part of the development cooperation landscape. Social mobilisation challenged the purposes and impacts of ODA, contested projects negatively impacting on the lives of local populations and championed greater transparency in the sector through the use of information technologies and information politics as a tactic. In most DAC members, spaces for participation have been negotiated and built along the intertwined policy realms of foreign policy and development assistance, usually gravitating towards the latter. This happened because throughout the 20th century, development assistance grew as a policy field in its own right: with specialised 'aid bureaucracies' (Lancaster 2007; Milani, Lopes, and Suyama 2013; Yanguas and Hulme 2015) and specialised aid-accountability mechanisms, as the UK ICAI, Japan's NGO-JICA Desk, the World Bank Inspection Panel and beyond.[616]

Development scholars have examined domestic civil society participation in donor countries through two intertwining lenses: 'aid constituencies' and 'aid monitoring movements'. While the former refers to CSOs interested in shaping aid policies and practices due to their global development activism (Eyben and Ferguson 2004; Lancaster 2007), the latter is characterised by its transparency, and notably budgetary transparency activism (McGee 2013; Jensen and Winthereik 2013; Honig and Weaver 2019).[617] Moreover, pro-accountability social mobilisation in DAC members has often revolved around three major understandings of state responsibility: (i) domestic accountability to taxpayers for spending in development abroad; (ii) international accountability to global non-binding commitments donors agreed on, notably the 0.7 % ODA/GNI target; and (iii) legal and para-legal responsibility for 'doing-no-harm' and eventually redressing socio-environmental damages and misconducts[618] incurring from development projects abroad.

Mobilisation and participation dynamics in large SSC providers exhibits, nonetheless, its own set of underpinning logics. On the one hand, as illustrated in the cases examined in the previous section, CSOs based in rising powers had to develop their own ways to engage Southern providers in the particularities of their (re)emerging global developmental roles. On the other hand, Southern-based CSOs had to navigate the tensions between rising powers' differentiation-based global development activism and what many considered universal social justice values. When compared to the activism on North-South aid, differences can be retrieved in two dimensions.

[616] This tendency is reverting since the mid-2010s with some countries merging their foreign relations and development cooperation bureaucracies, including Australia (in 2013), Canada (in 2013) and the UK (merger announced in 2020).

[617] The transparency framing mobilised by this second group, however, have also been advanced by other domestic groups beyond CSOs, such as journalists and the general public (Yanguas 2018a).

[618] Following the so-called #aidtoo scandals in 2018-2019, prompted by the global #Metoo movement against sexual abuse, this has come to include (at least for some bilateral and multilateral donors) safeguarding, reporting and acting on issues of sexual exploitation and abuse and other forms of sexual harassment in the sector.

First, SSC pro-accountability mobilisation has grew less out of clear expectations of rising powers fulfilling 'a duty to reduce global poverty' or a 'duty to publicise state use of taxpayers' money'—although the latter was certainly not absent—and more out of a sense of entitlement to engage with foreign policy priorities and outcomes. As seen in the case of activism around the NDB, in the anti-ProSavana campaign, and in the case of measuring efforts 'from below' in Brazil and India (in Chapters 5 and 6), public transparency narratives did shape SSC-related mobilisation. Yet the ways transparency was advanced was often connected to a broader 'right-to-know' and 'right-to-participate' in (foreign/SSC) policymaking than to purely budgetary concerns.[619] This can be understood in light of SSC practices not straightforwardly fitting the public imaginaries of 'grants to beneficiaries abroad': because of SSC 'mutual development' narratives, of the non-monetary nature of some SSC exchanges, or because SSC remains devoid of agreed upon financial obligations towards meeting global poverty alleviation targets (Clemens and Moss 2005; Bracho 2017).

Second, mobilisation around SSC remains limited to specific sections of organised civil society, which already worked internationally or on international affairs, and to specific issues that fluctuated across the years (Waisbich, Pomeroy and Leite forthcoming). While civil society groups in *Aidland* have a clearer self-identified identity and resources to work as 'aid watchdogs', those mobilising around SSC issues (knowledge groups, development and environmental NGOs, rights groups, labour unions, social movements and representatives of 'affected communities') not necessarily self-identified as 'SSC monitoring movements' or had the means to institutionalise a work stream around SSC. Whereas the more professionalised national groups within rising powers were able to secure funds with existing thematic transnational networks to sustain some kind of advocacy work, others only participated in fewer instances, such as in BRICS/NDB-related activities or in transnational campaigns like the 'No to ProSavana', on the basis of international solidarity (Berrón and Brant 2015; Poskitt, Shankland and Taela 2016; Mawdsley and Roychoudhury 2016; Milhorance and Bursztyn 2017).

Overall, social mobilisation across the three countries combined transparency, accountability and participation claims. While demands to participate as implementers of SSC exchanges were present in the three countries, claims to participate in policymaking were more visible in Brazil and India, though these are similarly growing within China. Participation was also understood and negotiated differently in the various mobilisation instances discussed above and throughout this thesis. While, in some instances, participation meant having communities being consulted about initiatives immediately affecting their lives and livelihoods (as in the case of ProSavana or the Lamu coal-power plant), in others it meant having a seat at the SSC policymaking table. Different conceptions of participation impacted on the tactics and

[619] Rights-based framings related to transparency and participation have been employed in the context of social accountability/non-electoral democratic control dynamics across a range of policy fields in Brazil and India (Prashant Sharma 2014; Isunza and Lavalle 2018) and increasingly so in foreign policy (Nel and Van der Westhuizen 2003; Lucia Nader and Waisbich 2014).

repertoires employed. Brazilian and Indian CSOs adopted what Mdlalose and Thompson (2018) termed 'tree shakers and jam makers' mobilisation strategies and carved, not without tensions, both insider/institutionalised and outsider/contestation spaces for dialogue with 'SSC bureaucracies'. Chinese organisations, on the other hand, have mainly adopted a non-confrontational approach, along the lines of the 'embedded activism', to carefully foster a space for their (critical) participation.

The Indian case is one where organisations have secured the most formalised space for participation, with the creation in 2013 of a Forum, the FIDC (see Chapter 6). The Forum came to existence a year after India's development agency, the DPA, was created and worked as an 'invited space' hosted by RIS to gather both the Indian MEA and a selected group of non-governmental actors. While some of the insiders recognised FIDC as a unique 'socio-state interface', using Pires and Vaz (2014) terminology, in a context where social participation has become more challenging,[620] others believe the space remains limited and controlled.[621] For certain outsiders, FIDC is 'too civil'[622]. The word 'civil' here alludes to official participation processes, like the Civil BRICS,[623] perceived as insufficiently radical (Bond and Garcia 2015) or, in Chatterjee's (2004, 33) words, 'sanitized and palatable' forms of participation.[624]

Internal divisions in terms of political views and tactics made negotiating spaces for participation around India's global development footprint even more challenging. Not only was the group of CSOs already small[625] but also the deep divisions within Indian civil society (mirroring their evolving political views on whether and how to formally engage the Indian state under Modi's BJP rule) hindered the creation of a larger 'SSC constituency'.[626] Actors like Oxfam India, the BRICS Feminist Watch and the People's Forum on BRICS became leading voices on BRICS/NDB-related matters between 2015-2017 but also their engagement faded away since. Demobilisation is a result of a combination of factors. This includes the invisibility of India's development cooperation among domestic groups already overburden with domestic developmental issues; growing domestic social turmoil and pressure over the voluntary sector under Modi's second term; and shrinking international funding to work on 'Global India'.

In Brazil, the coalition monitoring Brazilian SSC has secured less formalised spaces for participation but encompassed a wider range of actors and networks (professionalised NGOs, critical academics, social

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620 INT-IN-8; INT-IN-1.

621 INT-IN-20; INT-IN-2; INT-IN-3; INT-IN-10; INT-IN-14.

622 INT-IN-10.

623 The Civil BRICS, proposed and held for the first time by the Russian government in 2015, was set-up mirroring the 'civil-society track' or 'civil society summit' increasingly found in other intergovernmental processes like the C20 in the G20.

624 Some participants also pointed to engrained gender and caste dynamics in FIDC, which, in their view, make this space a very elite-dominated one and thus little representative of the broader diversity of Indian society (INT-IN-20; INT-IN-14; INT-IN-2; INT-IN-3).

625 One interviewee characterised the initial landscape of Indian CSOs and their relation to the agenda of SSC along the following profiles: 'oblivious', 'informed disengagement', 'cautious optimism' and 'enrichment' (INT-IN-8).

626 INT-IN-10; INT-IN-6.

movements, labour unions and/or foundations) tracking different dimensions of 'rising Brazil' (multinationals in the extractive industry, agribusinesses, foreign policy and the internationalisation of state social policies and their bureaucracies). For most of the 2010s, these groups, self-identified as a coalition of 'progressive social voices', acted along the dual-line of 'critical-collaboration' and 'contestation'. The former includes advocating for certain policy issues and policy instruments to be included in Brazilian SSC cooperation and partnering with state institutions (including ABC, BNDES and certain line-ministries) to design, implement and evaluate SSC initiatives and improve accountability practices. The latter speaks to 'naming and shaming' and resistance campaigns, like the 'No to ProSavana' campaign or the 'Affected by Vale' campaigns against the Brazilian giant mining company Vale, also in Mozambique (Berrón and Brant 2015; Milhorance and Bursztyn 2017; Cezne 2019). Activism on international issues decreased considerably in the last few years, mirroring the retreat of Brazilian SSC and a growing sense of urgency, among CSOs, to look and work domestically (Waisbich 2021).

The breadth and diversity of Brazilian civil society engagement with SSC finds no parallel in the other two countries. It also strongly contrasts with the dynamics in China, where a fairly small group of development and environmental CSOs, China-based INGOs, think tanks and independent journalists have been carving spaces for participation around China's *Going Out* and its developmental and environmental initiatives and impacts. There is, however, a growing demand by Chinese NGOs, such as China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, to act as implementers of state projects (Hsu, Hildebrandt and Hasmath 2016; Qiang 2019). Chinese organisations are also late comers to BRICS/NDB issues and have so far adopted a very low-profile.[627] Nonetheless, organisations in China have shown growing willingness and capacity to craft politically safe ways to mobilise around Chinese overseas investments in the last years, including in the context of the BRI.[628] The new agency, CIDCA, might also facilitate this in the years ahead, creating a single focal point for groups to engage with.[629] Contrasting with Brazil and India, social mobilisation in China was not openly discursively rooted in a 'right-to-scrutinise', to demand states officials to explain policy choices, to participate in foreign policy-related decisions, or to openly dissent. Rather, and following the 'embedded activism' paradigm, organisations have took longer to mobilise and are cautiously doing so by acting closer to the state as civic partners helping Chinese state institutions and companies to 'improve' their international development engagements (Yeophantong 2020; Waisbich forthcoming b).

Finally, a reflection on the implications of an increased globally polarised field for the negotiation of spaces for participation in large Southern providers. Southern-based CSOs have for decades participated in global debates, partnered with Northern donors and INGOs, and navigated the implications of doing so.

[627] This is visible inside the Coalition for Human Rights in Development, in the context of the NDB advocacy, but also in the fact that groups in China have had a very limited participation in BRICS-related grassroots mobilisation by networks of activists under the loose umbrella of the 'BRICS-from-below' or the 'People's Forum on BRICS' (Waisbich 2016).
[628] INT-CH-1.
[629] INT-CH-16; INT-CH-5; INT-CH-4.

However, entering the 'SSC monitoring world' has generated its own set of politics. Brazil, China and India-based CSOs close connections to, and strong reliance on foreign funding from the 'traditional' development apparatus created different degrees of governmental resistance and suspicion. Although Southern governments themselves received funds from 'traditional' donors to enhance the management or the 'knowledge component' of their cooperation systems,[630] 'SSC monitoring movements' proximity to *Aidland* was often used to de-legitimise or curb social mobilisation, as in the case of ProSavana or in the recently updated legal restrictions to operate in India and China.[631] Dependence on the development apparatus is now a hindrance. As exposed by one interlocutor: 'Southern funding has to come through (…) How can we monitor taking money from Germany?'.[632] Building domestic support for this kind of citizen oversight role within Brazil, China and India remains a major challenge for the social mobilisation in the years ahead and one that is not unrelated to the challenge of building larger SSC constituencies in Southern providers.

Conclusion

This chapter examined SSC accountability politics 'from below'. It looked at social mobilisation crosscutting domestic and global scales and at how civil society groups in Brazil, China and India have claimed, problematised and attempted to negotiate transparency, participation and alternative development models in SSC.

Building on the cases of the 'No to ProSavana Campaign', the cross-regional mobilisation around the BRICS bank, the monitoring of China's global environmental footprint, and on the multiple instances of 'measuring from below' discussed in previous chapters, I discussed how civil society sought to contest official development models embedded in South-South initiatives and challenge SSC policymaking conceptions. A first contribution made in this chapter was to highlight that SSC accountability politics 'from below' are indissociable from, on the one hand, mobilisation on foreign policy issues and, on the other, from social disputes over development models, policies and instruments and over how rising powers share them.

Another contribution of this chapter revolves around the nature of social mobilisation, underscoring that it has occurred along a continuum of embedded or institutionalised collaboration and contentious politics,

[630] As mentioned, countries like the United Kingdom or Germany have been funding knowledge activities in all three countries. In the UK case, this includes funding for China's Center for International Knowledge on Development, India's RIS-based Global Development Centre, and the BRICS Policy Centre-led Dialogues on International Cooperation in Brazil.
[631] INT-BR-47; INT-BR-36; INT-IN-8; INT-IN-20; INT-BR-40. A discussion of that in the context of Brazilian foreign policy can be seen in the advocacy tool-kit put together by the NGO Conectas on how to work with foreign policy in rising powers (see Conectas 2016).
[632] INT-IN-14.

with Brazil and India landscapes being more internally diverse than the Chinese one in the ways different organisations self-identity and engage the state on SSC issues. In all three countries, however, there are several groups willing to partner with the state and SSC implementing actors to promote accountability reforms, through what scholars have described as 'internal-external reformist alliances' (Fox and Brown 1998; Fox 2007a; Honig and Weaver 2019). This meant, in all three cases, having to navigate the tensions of acting both through showing disagreement and dissent and, at the same time, acting as partners in 'improving' SSC institutions to consolidate the field domestically. This was the case, in Brazil, of the Food and Nutrition Security Forum working alongside ABC on a cooperation policy for the sector or independent think tanks like *Articulação SUL* and BPC partnering with 'SSC bureaucracies' to improve their SSC institutional-settings, including their M&E frameworks, as discussed in Chapter 5. This is also the case of Indian organisations in FIDC or Chinese NGOs and think tanks working along policy banks and companies to improve socio-environmental regulations for overseas operations.

Looking at the issues of contention, I have suggested that some SSC modalities have been more contested than others, enabled by the materiality and political visibility of certain SSC exchanges and by transnational networks already mobilised around certain themes and issues, such as infrastructure building and agricultural development. My analysis also shows variation across the three countries and within countries in what issues become problematic and how civil society actors have claimed accountability and negotiated with 'SSC bureaucracies'. Not all groups employed rights-based accountability language or self-identified as 'negatively affected' by projects. Rather some self-identified as watchdogs or (critical) partners. Generally speaking, in India the most prevalent mode of engagement was the one of 'friendly critique', in Brazil of 'critical collaboration' and in China of 'constructive engagement'.

Against this backdrop, what can this collection of citizen-led accountability politics inform about the unfolding politicisation and consolidation of SSC? First, they illustrate the socially contested nature of foreign policy in emerging powers and its intersections with global development, with more or less political space for national civil society groups to articulate their expectations and objections, and with particular national configurations that allow for certain disputes to be thought and fought and others not. Second, accountability claims 'from below' reveal a range of unfolding domestic social justice battles and their connection to persistent forms of national and global inequalities. Demanding accountability offers a possibility for some of the 'losers' from development processes at home to articulate claims globally, to 'connect struggles' (Aguiar and Pacheco 2016) and 'articulate resistance' (Pomeroy and Silva 2017). Third, mobilisation instances illustrate ongoing, open-ended, processes of interaction with and contestation of SSC initiatives by domestic publics in rising powers. This means that social mobilisation itself is going through its consolidation phase, after having expanded in the early 2010s, based on a favourable set of conditions, including the politicisation and problematisation of SSC accountability by external actors, notably 'traditional' donors and 'aid watchdogs'.

This brings a new set of challenges for SSC accountability mobilisation 'from below' in the years ahead. First, to sustain and expand mobilisation in times of change and uncertainty going beyond the professionalised development and rights-oriented NGOs and increasing the popular basis of domestic SSC-related debates. Second, to connect with groups beyond borders 'affected' by Brazil, China and India's expanded developmental roles. This is important considering that CSOs within rising powers do not necessarily self-identify as 'SSC constituencies'. Rather they seem to advance identities and *modus operandi* of highly transnationalised social justice groups, which have encountered global Brazil, India and/or China as part of their work and will keep acting on and reimagining domestic and global justice simultaneously.

8. Revisiting (in)visible South-South cooperation accountability politics and reimagining global development responsibilities

What can the kaleidoscopic landscape of problematisations of and negotiations over accountability reveal about contemporary South-South cooperation and broader global development politics? After an extensive survey of different ways SSC accountability is being understood and disputed in Brazil, China and India, in this concluding chapter I revisit and expand the main contributions of this study.

I open the chapter by re-examining the 'accountability turn' in SSC and its significance to understanding, first, unfolding disputes around power, status and recognition in development cooperation, and, second, how foreign policy and development cooperation are conceived and disputed domestically within rising powers. Next, I provide a crosscutting analysis of the main drivers for Brazil, China and India to start acting upon the 'accountability problem' and craft ways to practice accountability in their SSC engagements. While doing so, I reflect on the differences in political salience and visibility of existing SSC accountability politics across these various geographies. I close this chapter with a reflection on ongoing intractable negotiations over a new agreement on 'shared but differentiated' global development responsibilities for the years ahead.

The 'accountability turn' in South-South cooperation

This thesis is the first full academic inquiry on accountability in/of SSC. Following a critical empirically-grounded research approach, this investigation contributes to debunking some of the myths around accountability and what it means to Southern partners. The findings I articulate here critically engage with the widespread idea that SSC is either opaque or unaccountable and that 'Non-DAC' Southern providers, like Brazil, China or India, do not care about or act on accountability issues. Neither does my investigation reify or romanticise SSC. Instead, it complexifies our understanding of how accountability is being conceived and disputed in global and domestic arenas in the context of SSC.

Thinking with and beyond accountability deficits

The comparative inquiry offered here challenges simplistic—and often Orientalist—narratives about Southern providers' accountability 'deficiencies and absences' and, at the same time, acritical narratives about an 'exceptionally benign, horizontal and mutually-beneficial' SSC. Navigating political and epistemic claims about North/South and ODA/SSC differential identities, the thesis offers a contribution to understanding SSC accountability politics along their own grain. My research endeavour, recognises, on the one hand, the conceptual-analytical limits of simply assimilating SSC into existing ODA accountability

standards and tools, and into the already documented bargains over 'aid accountability'. On the other hand, it also acknowledges the mutually constitutive dynamics between the two 'sub-fields', ODA and SSC, and evolving understandings and expectations on what accountable development cooperation means in the 21st century.

Through an empirically-driven mapping, tracing and analysis of disputes over accountability in/of SSC across different geographies and scales, the study offers a nuanced, multidimensional, multi-casual depiction of the tensions and conflicts over how, whether and to whom powerholders and 'SSC bureaucracies' explain and justify their development cooperation-related engagements. It draws a complex picture of how accountability is currently being conceptualised and negotiated in *global development-related arenas* (at the OECD, at the UN and in other diplomatic and para-diplomatic fora) as well as in *domestic policy and political arenas* in Brazil, China and India (in public debates, expert debates, intra and inter-bureaucratic bargains and in state-society interfaces).

Attentive to relationality, power and scale in international development and foreign policy dynamics, this thesis locates current SSC accountability politics into unfolding negotiations of rising powers' roles and identities in the field of global development. At the same time, it situates disputes over accountability as part of ongoing domestic negotiations, inside rising powers, over public behaviour and policy choices in matters of foreign policy and development cooperation. As such, the plurality of accountability dynamics unfolding in and across SSC partners identified and analysed here have to be taken not as accomplished 'solutions' to the 'accountability problem' but rather as ongoing disputes over global and domestic development responsibilities and over how to justify those to a range of publics.

Dilemmas of difference

This thesis contributes to filling some of the gaps left by existing scholarship on rising powers in international development. I show how state and non-state actors in rising powers navigate ways to conceive and practice accountability in development cooperation *differently*, based on a will to do and show doing accountability 'in a Southern way'. This finding converges with previous work (both within IR and in other disciplines) on rising powers' resistance-and-innovation stances towards global norms, resulting from their moderate global reformism and their authority and capacity to create new competing global norms and policy ideas (Narlikar 2013; Esteves and Assunção 2014; Milhorance and Soule-Kohndou 2017; Kenkel and Destradi 2019).

My analysis also shows that categories like Northern/Southern, Asian/Latin American, liberal democracy/non-liberal democracy help to illuminate durable sociopolitical and symbolic disputes around rising powers' role in global development and thus to understand the emergence of certain geopolitical and epistemic disputes over accountability in/of SSC. These categories matter politically and situate *Aidland's*

disciplining attempts to make Southern providers to align with an (often imagined) idea of 'proper' donor behaviour, which includes ideas and practices of accountability. Yet alone these categories do not fully explain variation in diplomatic behaviour. They do not account, for instance, for how and why India remains more vocally resistant to negotiating and experimenting with SSC accountability than China. Likewise, these categories are important but insufficient to make sense of the translation and localisation strategies and of the presence, or absence, of domestic disputes around SSC accountability in each of the three countries. Using India once again, SSC domestic accountability politics can only be understood at the crossroads of multiple factors, such as: the assertive and defensive foreign policy on development issues; little appetite to collaborate with DAC donors; relatively small materiality and little (perceived) distributive effects of SSC to domestic audiences; and the role played by internal 'SSC champions' as both global norm entrepreneurs and gatekeepers at home.

The combined use, therefore, of *macro-level* conceptual tools that locate Southern providers in global hierarchies of power, status and development and *meso-level* ones that pay attention to actors and institutions proved to be an appropriate approach to start unpacking a kaleidoscopic landscape on the move. It allowed for capturing the kinds of accountability debates taking place, at this particular point in time, and the kinds of instruments being negotiated and adopted in both postcolonial democracies like Brazil and India as well as in single-party regimes like China. It also allowed for assessing country variation and their context-specific forms of friction and hybridity between local and global norms.

Politicised consolidation: problematisations, negotiations and reforms

This thesis illuminates different dimensions of contemporary SSC consolidation dynamics, through the lens of its disputed nature and growing politicisation. In my inquire, politicisation and disputes over accountability are indissociable phenomena. Politicisation generates a set of socio, technical and (geo)political disputes over whether and how SSC providers can or should justify their development cooperation policies and practices to domestic and external stakeholders. Concurrently, disputes over SSC accountability—narrow or broad; procedural or substantial—contribute to the politicisation of the field both domestically and at the global level.

Following this first assertion, through my empirical, bottom-up, inquiry I found that that emerging 'arenas of conflict' over SSC accountability (Fox 2007a) represent disputes unfolding at different scales of state responsibility (national and global), based on different logics of political control (managerial, intra-governmental, intergovernmental and state-society relations), and responding to competing views of how governments are expected to explain, justify and be sanctioned for their SSC-related actions. Looking at

this landscape through its disputed nature is important because it allows to recast often flat accounts of accountability in development cooperation—and its presence or absence—into broader epistemic and geopolitical negotiations between Northern and Southern providers over power, status and responsibilities to manage global challenges, amid changing geographies of global governance and development in the 21st century. My findings are also important in what they reveal of development cooperation as a policy field in rising powers, and of particular materialisations of *intermestic* sociopolitical bargains over certain developmental sectors and over foreign policy engagements taking place within 'Southern protagonists', like Brazil, China and India, at this particular juncture.

Global and domestic politicisation

A first feature of this kaleidoscopic landscape relates to what I termed *global disputes* over accountability in/of SSC. Global disputes are shaping and being shaped by the contemporary politico-normative pluralisation and fragmentation in world politics, in general, and in global development, in particular. As such, and in order to understand how SSC accountability is rendered a public or policy problem at the global level one has to first recognise the situatedness of existing OECD-DAC norms and practices and of the unfinished negotiations that constitute them.

The story of global accountability norms entering the field, I argued, is the tale of a soft, non-binding, normative regime crafted in a particular resilient institutional locus: the OECD-DAC 'donors' club'. Actors in this 'closed space' (Eyben 2013) managed to secure the DAC's normative role by renegotiating an always internally contested consensus among its members and constantly updating its technical-political understandings of what accountability was and how it should be practiced. The numerous changes in the concept and metrics of ODA over the years illustrate this point. Despite the internal divergences, DAC members converged towards a set of shared understandings of 'aid accountability' as an instrument to, first, regulate competition among donors and regulate aid relations between 'rich donors' and 'poor recipients'. Second, to showcase donors' generosity and respect for taxpayers' money. Not only have concepts like ODA (defined 'concessional flows') and its components (such as 'aid modalities' and 'discount rates') became categories of aid governmentality, but also abiding by OECD-DAC rules on quantifying, evaluating and reporting has shaped donorship politics. Together they have produced boundary-making and disciplining dynamics among donor countries and between them and countries in the South.

This is equally a tale of pro-accountability reforms and tools being agreed and put in place globally and nationally in donor and recipient countries alike. These have been negotiated among a range of stakeholders (donors, recipients, domestic constituencies, 'aid monitoring movements' and development experts). Importantly, the very act of establishing mechanisms to 'fix' aid accountability deficits (oversight forums, transparency infrastructures or M&E artefacts) has generated its own discontents and debates on how to improve accountability tools, according to diverse expectations of what kind of control, justification and/or

information they should provide. The successive reforms of World Bank's Inspection Panel illustrate this point.

Acknowledging the situatedness of accountability, auditing and measuring regimes in *Aidland* is important not only as a sociohistorical background to the emergence of SSC accountability as 'problematic' in the field, but also as a set of geopolitical and epistemic drivers for the disputes between 'old' and 'new' development cooperation communities over what constitute appropriate behaviour and responsibilities in the field. These 'doxic battles' (Esteves and Assunção 2014) illuminate why the transparency of SSC flows, the so-called 'heterodox practices' of SSC providers, and issues around measurement of SSC became politically salient in global development debates in the last decade. Ongoing political-normative fragmentation in the field also help explaining why 'SSC champions' have responded to the different external pressures and accountability calls (from traditional development donors, transnational networks of activists, and from their own Southern peers) first through *differentiation-based resistance* stances, trying to circumvent the need to justify development cooperation to global audiences, and then through *differentiated integration* in global development accountability debates. Joining the club of 'providers' in a 'Southern way' meant trying out their own concepts and tools to justify SSC flows and their impact, and gave rise to a series of global and domestic forms of negotiations over how to practice accountability in/of SSC.

A second feature of the contemporary landscape are the *domestic disputes* over SSC accountability within Southern providers. Looking at three 'rising powers in international development', I argued that the current SSC consolidation moment is marked by a range of sociopolitical dynamics and bargains that illustrate the increasingly contested nature of this policy field within Brazil, China and India. The consolidation moment is characterised by greater internal pressure on the three governments (and on numerous 'SSC bureaucracies' and implementing actors) and multiple negotiations over how this greater global development role interacts with, contributes to or undermines these countries' domestic development imperatives, international identities and foreign policy priorities. Throughout this thesis I employed the correlated notions of 'dilemmas', 'tensions', 'traps' and 'anxieties' to characterise the foreign policy and domestic policymaking trade-offs rising powers face when balancing different policy goals, including promoting development at home and abroad. The nascent policy field in Southern providers is one that cannot fully dissociate, discursively or in practice, between development 'at home' and 'abroad' and between solidarity and interests (Milani 2018). It fits very uncomfortably the mythic rationale that historically framed 'traditional' development aid as state action to 'help developing others' and 'fight poverty elsewhere'.

The ways these tensions play out domestically varied not only across countries, but also with time. Brazil is a case where economic growth in the early 2000s was followed by a political-economic crisis that strongly

affected the pace and sustainability of SSC institutionalisation.[633] This scenario accentuated the trade-offs and generated new pressures for explaining the purposes of 'cooperating with other developing countries' and showing the results of these initiatives thus making domestic politics an important piece in the overall puzzle. Though less dramatic, economic slowdown in China has also accelerated institutional reforms in its 'aid/SSC system'. China's own domestic development anxieties and its interactions with a profound re-shifting of China's place in the world contributed, often through the lenses of performance and reputation, to insert issues of state and corporate accountability in/of SSC into the domestic agenda.

While recognising the growing but still bounded nature of politicisation of foreign policy and SSC matters within the three countries this study revealed politically salient themes, issues and sectors around which SSC accountability issues have already emerged. It also revealed the coexistence of public and expert policy debates around SSC accountability in domestic arenas on both specific SSC initiatives and to the broader role Brazil, China and India play as 'development actors'. These debates reveal four types of domestic sociopolitical disputes around SSC unfolding within Southern providers: i) SSC-specific management and bureaucratic disputes over development cooperation policies, budgets, delivery and measurement; ii) meta-foreign policy disputes over rising powers' identity, global role and partnerships; iii) meta-developmental state disputes over the role of the state promoting economic growth and fighting poverty at home and abroad; and iv) meta-citizenship disputes over citizen participation in SSC/foreign policymaking.

The will to reform and to practice accountability differently

Besides the disputes, this thesis has shown a growing will by different stakeholders within Brazil, China and India to act upon, reform and/or experiment practicing accountability in SSC. How to make sense of the set of factors driving 'pro-accountability reforms' in large Southern providers? Here I discuss three crosscutting findings.

A first driver relates to SSC policy reform and institutionalisation dynamics. For different reasons, and as a direct consequence of the expansionary phase in the early 2000s, in the 2010s, Brazil, China and India initiated a range of SSC institutionalisation reforms. In all three countries, accountability-specific reforms (related to transparency, measurement, audit and/or citizen participation) constituted part of a broader SSC policy management and governance reformist wave. Reforms were geared either towards specific sectors or institutions (e.g., India's LOCs/IDEAS) or to the national SSC institutional frameworks (e.g., China's strengthening CIDCA's planning role and Brazil developing evaluation guidelines for its South-South and trilateral cooperation). The contested nature of this institutionalisation domestically, I suggested, made

[633] A similar pattern can be found elsewhere. See, for instance, Medina and Muñoz (2019) for a detailed account of processes of expansion and contraction, or institutionalisation and de-institutionalisation, of SSC in several Latin American countries.

reforms not only a management matter but also an object of disputes and bargains within state institutions and between those responsible for SSC and other stakeholders within and outside the state, under progressively more pluralistic or distributive policy configurations around SSC in each country. The story of Brazilian SSC quantification tool, the *Cobradi* report, and its many internal and external discontents powerfully illustrate this point.

A second driver is the pro-accountability social mobilisation (both domestic and transnational) by emerging 'SSC monitoring movements': networks of civil society actors (i.e., knowledge actors, CSOs, social movements, journalists) concerned with SSC policymaking and its results. These 'SSC monitoring movements', as I labelled them, worked both as sources of social pressure on powerholders but also as partners in reforming 'SSC bureaucracies'. Monitoring movements also represent emerging 'constituencies' or 'publics' around SSC in Brazil, China and India and illustrate emerging inter-subjective perceptions of the growing sociopolitical and material effects of SSC initiatives to different domestic actors.

A third driver has been the existence of what development accountability scholars characterise as internal and external 'reformers' and 'alliances' for pro-accountability policy and social change (Fox and Brown 1998; Bebbington 2006). In each country, reformers and alliances shaped how SSC accountability-related policy and institutional changes were designed, moved forward and/or stalled. Particularly in the case of transparency and measurement tools, the will to reform joined the will certain public institutions and development practitioners had to communicate and showcase SSC. Their progressive engagement with issues of accountability is thus indissociable from a growing diplomatic will to showcase solidarity (and generosity) towards other developing countries and to showcase their developmental successes for both domestic legitimacy and political authority and for international projection purposes. The more SSC was linked to a status and legitimacy-seeking strategy of political leaders and of particular 'SSC bureaucracies' or individuals within them, as in the case of Brazil during the PT era and in the case of China in the more recent years, the greater institutional-bureaucratic incentives to experiment with counting and other accountability tools.

While examining alliances, I have also highlighted the importance of 'traditional' development actors (bilateral donors, UN agencies, foundations and INGOs) in partnering with governments, 'SSC bureaucracies' and knowledge actors and CSOs in rising powers to socialise them into expected 'good/appropriate' accountability practices. 'Traditional' development actors were key in fostering this first wave of SSC accountability policy debates and reforms. They have provided political, financial, and technical support to SSC policy communities inside rising powers to experiment with publicising quantifying and evaluating SSC flows and to progressively insert 'development effectiveness' into the agenda. Yet rather than a unidirectional socialisation, or even co-optation, I have shown that the ways to conceive, assess and show SSC developmental impacts are under negotiation between rising powers and

the development apparatus. The example of emerging evaluations of South-South and triangular cooperation in Brazil and in China, and the negotiations over methodologies and over what 'success' or 'impact' means in SSC, illustrate this point.

Visible and invisible accountability politics: prevalent 'measurementalities' and the materiality-political salience nexus

The multi-sited nature of this research further allows for a critical a crosscutting examination of what I call here 'visible' and 'invisible' disputes over SSC accountability. In this section, I revisit the ensemble of SSC accountability politics mapped in this thesis and reflect on what appears to be the more prevalent issues, themes and logics. While doing so, I also turn to longstanding debates about de-/re-politicisation of development cooperation.

From the multiple globally circulating understandings of accountability and how to practice it, the issue of *measurement* (quantifying SSC flows and assessing SSC performance and impact) arose as politically salient in both global and domestic SSC accountability debates. Measuring SSC was also the object of multiple sociotechnical, scientific and (geo)political controversies. How to make sense of this salience? The growing importance given to measurement by actors in *Aidland* and *SSC-land* alike reveals the prevalence and stickiness of audit cultures and 'measurementalities' in the field. In particular, it speaks to an ongoing disciplining intent by the development apparatus for legitimacy purposes, whereby to make rising powers conform with existing development cooperation norms—including quantifying, assessing and reporting development cooperation flows—is to secure the boundaries of what it means to be a development cooperation provider. Disciplining also responds to a practical need to bring Brazil, China and India to the 'donor table' and making them co-responsible for funding development abroad (Esteves 2017) and for securing the resources needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda (and now the post-Covid 19 green and equitable recovery challenges).

SSC *measurement battles*, analysed throughout this thesis unfolded from the confluence of, on the one hand, the willingness and desire—but not always the capacity—of DAC donors and 'aid monitoring movements' to make Southern providers to comply with reporting and evaluation norms and practices. And, on the other hand, of rising powers—among other SSC champions—starting, in the mid-2010s, to invest in measuring and showcasing what they saw as their 'solidarity-based', 'mutually-beneficial' and 'successful' cooperation initiatives. Considering that solidarity or generosity are far from the only drivers behind SSC—which is knowingly permeated by geopolitical and geoeconomics ambitions—measurement battles also aided rising powers' governments to circumvent stricter development cooperation financial and normative commitments and avoid having to justify fulfilling them to global audiences.

Whilst expressing their will to conceptualise and practice SSC accountability (or at least the counting and reporting dimensions of it) in a 'Southern way', rising powers have exhibited different diplomatic and para-

diplomatic stances. Brazil adopted a more critical-compromising diplomatic posture in global arenas, echoing a long foreign policy tradition to act as a bridge between the North and South. Brazilian state and non-state actors have devised tools and methodologies to measure SSC and have sought to build common understandings among Southern providers. India, alternatively, adopted a critical-blocking diplomatic stance based on strong differentiation claims as a 'non-Western', 'Southern' and/or 'Asian emerging power'. Indian quasi-official actors—such as the MEA-affiliated think-thank RIS—adopted active knowledge and policy entrepreneur roles to foster 'Southern-grown' ideas around measuring SSC aiming less at creating a consensus than securing a regime based on the plurality of national-led solutions. As for China, it showed no willingness to proactively lead on the diplomatic or para-diplomatic discussions or to engage in diplomatic and epistemic battles over measuring SSC. While upholding its right to develop a solution 'with Chinese characteristics' to the accountability problem, China adopted a less active and less confrontational role (out of a mix of pragmatism and disinterest) both at the UN and in other para-diplomatic spaces, like the RIS-led Delhi Process or in the NeST.

However sticky development 'measurementalities' might be, the political salience of measurement in contemporary SSC is also embedded in its own politics and generates its own *measurement paradoxes*, as I labelled them, whereby Southern providers embark on counting and showcasing exercises while having to deal with two sets of political costs. First, the costs of proving, or performing, 'effectiveness of SSC' to the international community based on tools and knowledges that might not fit their own development cooperation purposes and practices. Second, the costs of enhanced visibility of SSC among domestic constituencies fuelling domestic disputes over rising powers' international identities as 'developing/Southern' countries and the real and imagined trade-offs between promoting development at home and abroad.

Tracing the particular materialisations of measurement paradoxes in Brazil, China and India allowed for drawing empirical and conceptual interconnections between global and domestic accountability politics. Echoing James Scott's (1999, 27) proposition that 'measurements are decidedly *local*, *interested*, *contextual*, and *historically specific*', in each country I have located the domestic-specific manifestations of the measurement paradox within broader dynamics of shifting foreign policy and development provider identities and context-specific public management and public policies cultures. In the case of Brazil, for instance, the will to measure responded to a survival strategy by the 'SSC policy community' to show results and keep resources to SSC flowing amidst a deteriorating political-economic scenario. It was also about fighting political legitimacy and policy battles not only along the North-South divide but also in domestic and global competitive markets for developmental policy solutions.

Alongside measurement, the workings of Southern national or Southern-led multilateral development banks constituted another recurrent theme around which SSC accountability has been problematised and

negotiated, within Brazil, China and India, and in transnational arenas. Growing disputes around South-South development finance, particularly for infrastructure building, points to a direct link between the *materiality* of this form of South-South exchange and its *political salience* (and significance) to a range of domestic and international stakeholders.

This study found across all research sites the simultaneity of different accountability logics (i.e., financial, managerial, legal, social) underpinning disputes and negotiations over the purposes, workings and impact of Southern development banks. Coexisting logics indicate the role different domestic constituencies played in problematising certain types of 'SSC accountability deficits' (i.e., transparency, socio-environmental safeguards, audit and compliance) as much as their continuous pressure on powerholders and oversight bodies to move forward with their preferred set of reforms. Common to the three countries, pro-accountability reforms were pursued mainly to respond to concerns over project performance, diplomatic reputation and domestic support for infrastructure building abroad. In doing so, reforms tried to safeguard or sustain South-South development finance schemes as a soft power and economic diplomacy tool rather than to improve 'development effectiveness' of funded projects on the ground.

Lastly, disputes related South-South infrastructure building abroad were not treated by domestic publics as stand-alone issues. Rather they fed into broader internal policy and public debates on the developmental state, private-public collusion and corruption, or on sustainable/green development models. This interconnectedness clearly appeared in the different social mobilisation instances, examined throughout this thesis. Through different strategies, civil society groups within Brazil, China and India have challenged Southern development banks' promises to deliver 'much needed infrastructure' to several parts of the Global South while pleasing different economic actors inside rising powers. Instead, social mobilisation sought to make visible that there are always losers to these processes.[634] While modest in size and impact and not always capable to penetrate mainstream political and policy debates, these subnational SSC accountability politics, 'from within' and 'from below', are already present in many initiatives and tend to grow in tandem with SSC own expansion.

Less visible accountability politics

Contrasting with the explicit acknowledgement of the need to act on and 'fix' measurement or development finance accountability issues, problematisations of SSC accountability 'from below' in large SSC providers, subnational politics in partner countries and transnational activist campaigns remain less politically salient forms of SSC accountability politics. Equally absent have been voices from other Southern partners, with certain exceptions, notably in the Chinese case.

[634] For a discussion of social contestation and uneven development in the context of infrastructure, notably dam-building, in Brazil and India, see Huber and Joshi (2015); Hochstetler (2016); Atkins (2019).

The relative invisibility of 'subnational politics' and 'mutual accountability' in South-South relations is worth unpacking. As argued extensively throughout this thesis, accountability dynamics in SSC do not necessarily reproduce the exact same 'trust dilemmas' between 'Northern/rich' donors and 'Southern/poor' recipients or the 'taxpayers' money' accounting imperatives found in *Aidland*. Rather SSC introduces its own mix of tensions to this issue. Framing the relationship as 'demand-driven', 'government-to-government', 'win-win' partnerships has, in many ways, allowed rising powers to overlook the social impacts of their actions and dismiss initial criticism and calls for political accountability or redress—regardless from who was raising it—under the banner of non-interference. Official SSC framings of mutual gains combined with durable resentments towards colonial and contemporary international hierarchies have also removed the political incentives for other Southern governments to speak out in global forums as they did when denouncing 'aid asymmetries' in the past.

Nonetheless, as SSC continued to expanded, it became clear that SSC practices are infused with power asymmetries and that being officially 'solidarity-based' or 'demand-driven' does not make SSC free from 'partnership issues' to be negotiated. Discomfort from domestic stakeholders and Southern experts with procurement conditionalities or socio-environmental impacts on the ground in the case of Indian LOCs or with levels of public indebtment towards China, are examples of areas where South-South relations have been already discussed and negotiated beyond the simplistic assumptions that SSC is necessarily mutually beneficial.

So far critical voices in government, academia and/or civil society challenging the official consensus from within, especially in India and China, have remained limited. Moreover, while having manged to flag tensions and contradictions in certain SSC initiatives, critics have been less successful in bringing about sustained changes. In certain cases, like the Chinese dam-building in the Mekong region or the coal-power plant in Kenya, civil society actors have successfully mobilised, legally and transnationally, and explored fractures along subnational lines and growing global concerns with the environment and climate-neutral futures. In other cases, however, including the mobilisation on Indian agricultural investments in Ethiopia or on coal-plant building in Bangladesh, social actors did not succeed in discursively convincing others of the 'problematic nature' of certain projects or generating any 'accountability crisis' capable of shifting power dynamics to revert projects or address their negative outcomes on certain marginalised groups. Yet one could assume that the more SSC expands and becomes entangled with pre-existing streams of unequal local development, the more it will generate resistance and contestation 'from within' and 'from below', as the Chinese case vividly illustrates.

Accountability calls and their de-/re-politicisation effects

A last crosscutting reflection refers to the effects of the 'accountability turn' on contemporary SSC politics. Problematisations of accountability in the field of development have historically contributed to both de- and re-politicise development cooperation. In the case of SSC, as I show in this thesis, 'traditional' donors have discursively used accountability issues to question and discipline rising powers. While often embedded in *Aidland's* own technical or sanitised conceptions of 'development/aid accountability', calls coming from the development apparatus are politicising as they generate agonism—in Mouffe's (1993) conceptualisation—and unveil material and symbolic disputes unfolding in a 'post Western', 'beyond aid', world in-the-making. Accountability demands 'from below', from civil society groups, have also worked to re-politicise SSC: requesting SSC providers to justify policy options and results as means to question SSC principles and their application, and to contest outcomes on the ground. Similarly, growing subnational politics within rising powers or in the other Southern partner have also generated disputes around SSC accountability and thus contributed to bring politics back to South-South government-to-government, 'elite brokerage', developmental deals, showing that the state and elite are no monolithic entities.

Concurrently, accountability calls by 'traditional donors', *Aidland* practitioners or global 'aid monitoring movements' are equally de-politicising when embedded in technical, technological, and exclusively quantification conceptions of what accountability is and how it should be practiced. These calls can and do lead SSC providers into the same 'rendered technical' (T. M. Li 2007) managerial conceptions of accountability as financial or number-based accounts on development cooperation flows, performance and impact, or into data-driven technical/technological 'fixes' for different constituencies to monitor flows.

Rising powers' responses to these multiple accountability calls can be seen as both de-/re-politicising. While reducing growing accountability (or responsibility) calls to finding new ways to measure SSC monetary flows and contributions to the Agenda 2030, governments and experts have de-politicised the debate. Concurrently, by disputing the counting of flows and seeking alternative ways to account for development cooperation, and generating measurement battles and controversies, Southern practitioners also rendered some development cooperation sociotechnical politics visible. By exposing *Aidland's* obsession with monetary quantification and quasi-experimental evaluations and de-naturalising 'generosity rankings', they contributed to render visible the connection between knowledge and power, thus (re)politicised development cooperation.

However, while SSC champions' quest to innovate (conceptually, methodologically, technically) in practicing measurement, simultaneously mimicking and subverting DAC/ODA standards, is undoubtedly political it is not necessarily transformative. Rising powers' reformist stances certainly contest power asymmetries in inter-state relations (and contribute to pluralism in international affairs) but they neither

necessarily question underpinning international hierarchies nor alter intra-states dynamics that create and perpetuate marginalisation and inequality across geographies.

Reimagining development cooperation responsibilities in the 21st century

I end this chapter with a reflection on the years ahead. A recurrent theme in this thesis has been the disputed nature of Brazil, China and India's public responsibilities towards promoting development at home and abroad and the tensions between these two. As the 21st century unfolds, the divide 'at home/abroad' becomes even blurrier, as poverty and inequality mount in Northern donors, new geographies of inequality emerge in the South, and 'universal' development agendas, including the climate emergency, gain salience (ECLAC 2014; Horner and Hulme 2017).

In this context, many have called for a new agreement on 'global development responsibilities'. Calls were quickly channelled into debates on financial (or monetary) contributions and metrics to count it, with some suggesting the adoption of a 'universal financial scaled contribution' for SDGs (Sumner et al. 2020). Agreeing on new targets is, hence, at the core of present and future bargains between traditional development actors and middle-income countries (MICs), including Brazil, China and India. There are major challenges to a future agreement on a new target including the lack of consensus within an 'heterogenous South' (Lauria and Fumagalli 2019) on the need for large(r) developing economies to commit to financial targets and the implications of this commitment to both their status of emerging-while-still-developing countries and the historical debt Northern countries have towards the developing world.

Understanding the current impasse requires taking seriously the genesis of existing responsibilities in the field and how Southern countries perceived them. As exposed in this thesis, in the process of forging a 'community of donors' and, for a set of sociohistorical reasons, including colonialism, Northern donors have agreed on 'special responsibilities' (Bukovansky et al. 2012). In particular, donors agreed on a financial commitment for ODA poverty alleviation efforts (the 0.7% GNI ODA target). As for most of norms in the field, this is a non-binding commitment, which explains why the majority of DAC members keep failing to meet it.[635]

[635] The target is, nonetheless, hard-law in some countries, like the UK. In the most recent years, the target was only met by the UK, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Luxembourg, and Sweden, as well as by three non-OECD countries, namely Qatar, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia (Sumner et al. 2020). Gulrajani and Calleja (2019) have also shown, through the Principled Aid Index, that poverty alleviation or priority to assisting the so-called Least Developed Countries is not the main driver for aid allocation in all DAC donors.

So far there is no commonly agreed-upon conception of 'responsibilities' or 'financial commitments' in the context of development exchanges between developing/Southern countries. Absence of agreement is above all a politically principled position. SSC providers' *differentiated integration* as 'development partners' assumes that ODA financial targets emerged from an historical debt turned into a financial compromise while SSC comes from a different rationale, reiterated since the 1978 BAPA, of solidarity and collective self-reliance.[636]

This principled position became, nonetheless, harder to sustain in the last decades as the global geographies of development kept changing, including due to austerity and political retreat in the West. Tensions only increased from 2015 onwards with the successive calls for the 'rising South' to be included as an 'additional source of financing for development', illustrated by the initial (and frustrated) hopes that BAPA+40 would unequivocally insert SSC into the SDGs paradigm with clear financial responsibilities. These calls were met with discomfort by several in *SSC-land*, fearing the new debates on 'financing for development' ('from billions to trillions' under a so-called 'universal development' paradigm) could dilute the hardly fought 'Northern duty' to uplift the South based on ideas of global equity and of reparation for centuries of colonial exploitation (Besharati 2017; Esteves 2017).

There is currently a clear intellectual, political and normative divide within major Southern providers. On the one hand, there are voices who reject the idea of 'global responsibilities' for SSC, based on hard(er) interpretations of the CBDR principle. This is for instance the line adopted by the G77+China in its official statements that clearly emphasise the complementary nature of SSC vis-à-vis North-South cooperation in issues of financing for development.[637] Scholars like Zhang (2020, 244) believe China's current position reflect this hard(er) stance and that 'China will never commit to DAC's 0.7% GNI target, as there is still a big poor population at home'. Similarly, Indian experts used the CBDR principle to contest the need for SSC providers to agree on responsibilities, arguing instead that responsibility in SSC is chiefly towards meeting partners' demands in a horizontal way (M. Chakrabarti 2019). According to this script, bilateral South-South exchanges would be inherently 'responsible' and 'responsive' and would not require additional global responsibility regimes, and even less so regimes based on financial commitments.

Other Southern voices argued, alternatively, in favour of Southern providers accepting an indirect set of financial responsibilities towards the global community, albeit in more flexible formats than the 0.7% ODA

[636] As discussed in Chapter 4, in the 2009 Nairobi outcome document, UN members once again defined SSC as based on solidarity from MICs to other developing countries and thus a financial complement to North-South cooperation not a substitute. The idea of complementarity, a constant in G77+China statements, was once more emphasised in the context of BAPA+40, in 2019.

[637] This stance is visible in G77+China Ministerial Declaration of September 2019 that states: 'As North-South cooperation is the main channel of development financing, the international community must uphold the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" (CBDR) and push North-South cooperation to continue to play its key role. Developed countries should bear the primary responsibility in financing for development' (G77 2019b, para. 28).

target. There have been proposals for the use of 'self-differentiation', alike in the 'nationally-determined contributions' in the climate change regime, where each country could set its own parameters (Bracho 2017) or for operationalising the notion of 'differentiated/differential' commitments for SSC under a 'concentric responsibilities' regime: a 'CBDR 2.0' (Esteves et al. 2019). Despite being on the table at least since the set-up of the 'equator-less' GPEDC, in 2012, the notion of 'differential responsibilities' was neither clarified nor formally discussed among Southern providers.

To make matters more complex, under an ever-thinning multilateralism,[638] rising powers' resistance to take on formal financial responsibilities have been met with traditional donors backtracking on theirs. Under this 'burden-sharing game' (Bracho 2017), traditional donors diluted their commitments while emerging powers decided not to collectively agree on any, not even under alternative frameworks of 'concentric responsibilities', and diplomatically acted to block initiatives that could restrict their autonomy and growth aspirations. Facing this deadlock, many commentators started to believe that the notion of 'differentiated responsibilities' was becoming less of a tool to promote global equity and more of a cover for large Southern economies to retreat on global responsibilities while some Northern donors do the same (Bracho 2015; Sumner et al. 2020). The intractable nature of the current debates is visible in the fact that the GPEDC never achieved a buy-in from Brazil, China and India. Moreover, the BAPA+40 conference not only advanced little in creating a more robust normative backbone for SSC but also, symbolically, was a UN development-related document without any explicit mention to the 0.7% target.

In this context, is useful to take a step back and critically reflect on the terms of the debate. Although most of the North-South impasse has revolved around financial targets, is clear that the ongoing disputes go beyond the monetary dimension. Rather there are two interlinked impasses. The first one is politico-normative and concerns issues of status and recognition in international affairs and of ongoing bargains over who has (or should have) special duties and responsibilities. The second one is financial-accounting and revolves around how these special responsibilities should be allocated. The rather narrow focus on financial responsibilities is at the same time inescapable considering the 'financing for development' turn in the field and a source of resistance from Southern partners, in particular rising powers.

This financial lens generates, as shown throughout the thesis, particular responses from and effects on large Southern providers, notably a continuous denunciation of the structuring inequalities that constitute the field and a will to engage in status-seeking global measurement battles to redefine their own position in the ranking of 'responsible' and 'generous' states. At the same time, it pushes governments and practitioners in *SSC-land* to perform quantifiable successes while navigating the domestic tensions of greater scrutiny over

[638] The expression 'thinning multilateralism' was employed by development experts in a 2019 conference hosted by UNDP Seoul Policy Centre (UNDP 2019) and refers to the current changes in global governance and the challenges multilateral institutions face to address global challenges, in a range of policy domains.

their development cooperation flows. Amidst an increasingly competitive, when not polarised, configurations few in *Aidland* have recognised that even without having formal financial targets, Brazil, China and India (and others, including Turkey or Qatar) have steadily increased their financial contributions to the UN development system in the last decade (Mao 2020; IPEA/ABC 2018; Haug 2020). Likewise, the narrow focus on financial responsibility also renders invisible and unthinkable other types of responsibilities or contributions, such as in the case of non-(exclusively) monetary development cooperation efforts and the policy ideas and imaginaries of development and social change embedded in them. The current double-crisis of climate emergency and the pandemic of Covid-19 are powerful reminders of the need to rethink global development responsibilities in the years ahead with and beyond common but differentiated financial targets. Reconceptualising responsibilities might also offer an opportunity to go back to some of the original, and in many ways never achieved, promises of South-South cooperation to reimagine development and development cooperation.

Appendices

1. A note on navigating the 'Western-centric bias' and essentialised North-South binaries in South-South cooperation research

A negative otherness is particularly hard to theorize,
because we are required to theorize what these societies are not.
(Kaviraj 2010, 36)

An equator-less, inclusive global partnership exposes the fractures and fluidity of the imagined geographies of development cooperation, where both differences and similarities are exaggerated to create acceptable locations in the new landscape.
(Eyben and Savage 2013, 467)

Researching accountability in/of SSC feels like navigating an agitated sea. Writing about 'travelling theories' and their 'global peregrinations', Edward Said (1991) argues that the places of origin of theories are 'irreducible first conditions', providing limits and applying pressures to which agents respond. As a travelling concept, accountability can be taken along the same lines. The political construction of the term and its associated keywords in liberal democracies ('transparency', 'right to know', 'whistle-blower', 'advocacy', 'openwashing', 'social accountability') has driven scholars and those designing development accountability interventions towards 'linguistic determinism' (Fox 2018, 68).[639] Translation challenges and linguistic uneasiness are powerful reminders of the knowledge politics embedded in the concept and how the term, in English, has circulated and imposed itself as the hegemonic term to define a set of practices around how power is (should be) exercised and controlled, including in development cooperation.

Unease is also related to the fact that calls for accountability, in its English rendition, historically intersects with Southern countries' experiences of being told how to govern and manage their own public affairs. For many Southern-based development practitioners, accountability became a term used as a 'loan world' (Eyben 2008), whose meaning is tightly associated with the international actors that diffuse it. These linguistic and semantic translation hiccups, which constantly popped in my own research, are crucial to

[639] In Latin languages, the direct translation of accountability read as 'to provide an account' rather than 'to hold or be held accountable' (*rendre comptes*, *rendir contas*, *prestar contas*, in French, Spanish and Portuguese, respectively). At the same time, these languages offer a set of concepts that still coexist alongside the term 'accountability'. In Portuguese, while 'to give an account' (*prestar contas*) is a term closely related to the financial accountability, other concepts such as 'responsabilisation', 'oversight' and 'citizen oversight' (*responsabilização*, *fiscalização* or *controle* and *controle democrático não-eleitoral* or *controle social*, respectively) describe different control dynamics. In Brazil is increasingly common to see the term 'accountability' added—in English and Italic—after these native terms (Pinho and Sacramento 2009). As for China, Dermort's (2009) discourse analysis study with Chinese business managers shows, for instance, a lack of consensus on how to translate accountability into Chinese languages, with interviewees offering Chinese equivalents: xin ren 信 任, ke kao xing 可 靠 性 , ke yi lai xing 可 以 赖 赖 性 , jie shi 解 , and bian hu 辩 护. In my own conversations with people working in the development sector in China, and in particular NGO workers connected to international networks, I was told it was initially difficult to find a translation for the term 'accountability', due to a confusion between the terms 'responsibility' and 'accountability'. My interlocutors said this has been clearer now, with the major differentiation being the external factor: accountability is understood as a pressure from outside whereas responsibility is more internal to the individual/institution.

understand some countries' resistance to the concept of accountability; perceived as yet another Western imposition.

Yet, with the rise in visibility and importance of SSC, accountability has imposed itself as an issue for many Southern providers and in ways worth empirically investigating in their own terms. This thesis fully engages with recurrent policy, academic, and normative claims—particularly in *SSC-land*—pointing to the conceptual and political challenges to understand SSC accountability dynamics on purely traditional OECD-DAC terms. These claims rightly highlight that SSC do not respond to the same notions of responsibility and political control and the same sociopolitical circumstances that prompted ODA accountability to become a political and academic problem in the first place. To respond to this decolonial call is thus to attempt situating the contours of the original 'aid accountability problem', including the need to rebalance power relations between donors and recipients, promote 'inclusive aid', democratise development national and global governances, and/or provide detailed accounts to national taxpayers on resources invested to fight poverty abroad.

Thinking SSC accountability from the South is also about recognising the existence of accountability issues that are specific to SSC, fully embracing postcolonial warnings that modernity in the South is not adequately understood as a 'counterfeit of a Euro-American "original"' (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012, 117). On the contrary: it demands to be apprehended and addressed in its own right. Decolonising the study of SSC accountability is to recognise the 'Western-centric bias' in SSC research (Six 2009; Muhr 2016; Bergamaschi, Moore and Tickner 2017; Mawdsley, Fourie and Nauta 2019) and to continue circumventing Western/Eurocentrism when studying foreign policy in the South (Acharya and Buzan 2019; Tickner and Smith 2020). However, one has also to be aware of the risk of over-essentialising the differences between North-South and South-South cooperation and hardening North-South divides that impede the very act of critically inquiring on SSC accountability.

As an implicated researcher aware of the 'simultaneous indispensability and inadequacy' (Chakrabarty 2008 [2000], 6) of universals I have frequently reflect on how to disentangle actors' discourse about SSC—and its differentiation claims—from the social world of SSC politics that researchers need to unpack. In other words: up to what extent the differential nature of SSC requires us to study SSC accountability differently? Rather than a definitive answer I start responding to this question drawing on the reflections of critical scholars like Cesarino (2013) when she suggests 'provincializing' the rather totalising concepts from aid scholarship so as to embrace more open-ended configurations of SSC with all its potentialities, internal contradictions, and its 'ebbs and flows' (Cesarino 2019). SSC, she argues, lacks the robustness at the level of policy found in Northern donors and in more traditional policy domains within Southern providers (such as health, education, or agricultural development).

Looking the recent (and heated) politico-administrative reforms in major aid donors like the US and the UK, one could challenge Cesarino's (2013, 12) characterisation of 'cold landscape of Northern development aid' and acknowledge that aid motivations and domestic pressures change across countries and in a same country over time (Lancaster 2007; Veen 2011; Milani 2019). While doing so, one must nonetheless recognise the effects of robust and consolidated 'development cooperation bureaucracies' in the practice of different development providers and in the frequency, intensity and visibility of domestic disputes, including accountability disputes. As such, accountability politics in SSC providers differ from the dynamics observed in DAC donors, where the 'aid/IDC' policy field is more consolidated and the set of stakeholders, interests, and policy bargains more explicit and politically salient.[640] Rather than an Orientalist broken-mirror representation of Northern/Western aid systems, characterisations of SSC as 'emergent' (Cesarino 2013), 'in-the-making' (Cabral 2016), and more recently 'under consolidation' (Mawdsley 2019) make both explicit and not-always-explicit discursive and political confrontation determine the conditions of emergence and development of SSC politics and accountability politics worth investigating in their own terms.

[640] Veen's (2011) study is largely based on legislative debates in a set of European donors, while in my case legislative debates could only be used as one among other data sources because international development-related legislative debates in Southern providers remain limited. For initial reflections on SSC legislative debates, see Waisbich (2019).

2. Methodological diary

Mapping Accountability Politics: Charting out contention and controversies around accountability in South-South cooperation

During the first year of research, and relying on secondary data, media, and documental review, I have mapped (i) coexisting and conflicting *discourses, narratives,* and *ideas* around accountability in/of SSC, and (ii) a series of relevant SSC *accountability politics cases/practices* in emerging economies (focussing on Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa). Initial taxonomies were created out of these mapping exercises, looking to the context-specific ways in which the 'SSC accountability problem' was understood.

Preliminary taxonomy for global narratives around accountability in South-South cooperation

In my preliminary taxonomy for salient, coexisting, and competing global discourses/narratives around SSC accountability, I have codified a set of policy/political discourses and narratives (and correlated practices) in terms of their 'policy ideas' (King 1973) or 'accountability logics' (Berghmans, Simons and Vandenabeele 2017), the nature of the spaces where those ideas are debated, the main actors shaping them, and the eventual accountability practices and mechanisms entailed. This taxonomy constituted a heuristic device to guide me in reading a very complex landscape. Rather than trying to fix accountability ecosystems—always contextual, relational, and thus multiple—this exercise allowed me to capture policy discourses and their competing logics.

The four thematic clusters I have identified to be explored in-depth, revised, and/or complemented with fieldwork data were: (i) *Accountability as horizontality*; (ii) *Accountability as transparency*; (iii) *Accountability as learning;* and (iv) *Accountability as participation.* I have presented and discussed this taxonomy, exploring actors and processes behind each of them, in four academic conferences in 2018: BRICS Policy Diffusion and Development Cooperation Workshop (IDS-Sussex, February 2018), the Development Studies Association Rising Powers Group meeting (LSE-London, April 2018), the International Conference on Policy Diffusion and Development Cooperation (UNIFESP-Sao Paulo, May 2018), Development Studies Association Annual Conference (Manchester, June 2018).

Preliminary mapping of South-South cooperation accountability politics

My second mapping exercise consisted of coming up with a list of past and current SSC accountability politics manifestations/instances/cases, involving a broader range of SSC actors (countries, development banks and policy networks). Those were codified as potential cases studies (see Table 1, below). For each manifestation, I have identified the most salient accountability *issue* at stake (transparency, citizen

participation, socioenvironmental norms, development outcomes), the *level* (national or global) the manifestation takes places and a provisional coding for the *type* of accountability politics they represent, based on the existing literature around international public accountability.

The cases were used to build the overall PhD argument are different *forms or types of accountability* politics assemblages to be retrieved from *spaces, sites or arenas of contention* (either specific countries or development cooperation initiatives, programmes, or projects) in one country (Brazil, India, or China) or one international actor (the BRICS-led New Development Bank - NDB or the Network of Southern Think Thanks – NeST). By approaching the object in this manner, I used countries and the transnational arena as sites/arenas where exemplary forms of multi-level accountability politics take place rather than embarking on a classical structured focused case comparison (George and Bennett 2005; Bovens, Curtin and Hart 2010).

Proposed selection criteria

The framework for case selection stems directly from the mapping exercise, in line with the imperatives of a grounded theory approach rather than a pre-designed comparative framework. Importantly, criteria are open to reinterpretation, recodification and reorganisation as fieldwork progresses. Table 2 presents the criteria for coding and selecting accountability politics cases for the in-depth inquiry during fieldwork. Based on these criteria, I have selected accountability politics manifestations for the subsequent multi-case study analysis. What I call 'cases' here refer to sites, institutions, processes, and governmental tools. They are not classic 'case studies', but rather exemplary forms of accountability politics assemblages. 'Cases' feature different types of assemblages, all of them comprised of multiple accountability politics playing out simultaneously, while bounded by a set of identifiable accountability logics. Table 3 presents a list of such assemblages related to Brazilian and Indian development cooperation.

Table 1 – Initial mapping of SSC accountability politics: potential case-studies

Case	Issue	Type	Level
New Development Bank (NDB): politics of accountability in a Southern-led multilateral development bank (engagement with civil society, consultation with affected communities, information disclosure practices)	Citizen participation	politics of reputational accountability	Global
Brazil: Formal and informal state-society interfaces, such as the Food and Nutritional Security Council – CONSEA and other multi-stakeholders' policy dialogues, and its role in Brazilian SSC policy-making	Citizen participation	politics of diagonal accountability	National
India: Accountability politics in cross-regional civil society alliances to contest land grabbing in Ethiopia	Development outcomes	politics of external accountability	National/ Global
Brazil: Accountability politics in cross-regional civil society alliances to contest land grabbing in Mozambique and challenging ex post answerability regarding the Pro-Savana Program	Development outcomes; Citizen participation	politics of external accountability	National/ Global
Brazil: Accountability politics in official SSC reporting and measuring initiatives: COBRADI (IPEA-led), SSC Platform (ABC-led) and ABC Working Group on Monitoring and Evaluation and civil society-led SSC budgetary transparency initiatives	Transparency, reporting and measurement	politics of transparency	National
Mexico: Accountability politics in official AMEXCID reporting and measurement initiatives (Transparency Platform, Registry)	Transparency, reporting and measurement	politics of transparency	National
India: Accountability politics in engaging with civil society in development cooperation-related initiatives (Asia-Africa Growth Corridor Consultations and the Indian Forum for Development Cooperation – FIDC)	Citizen participation	politics of vertical accountability	National/ Global
Network of Southern Think- Tanks (NeST): Accountability politics in 'policy networks' negotiating common frameworks for conceptualizing, measuring and monitoring and evaluating SSC	Transparency, reporting and measurement	politics of peer accountability	Global
India: Accountability politics in setting-up environmental safeguards in concessional loans and the role of the DFID-India working group	Socio-Environmental safeguards	politics of external accountability	National
China: The politics of stock exchange regulations for Chinese investments overseas and the case of NDB's Green Bonds regulations issued in China	Socio-Environmental safeguards	politics of market accountability	National/ Global

Table 2 – Criteria for coding and selecting SSC accountability politics cases

Criterion	Type
Forms of SSC accountability politics – From where, in the main state decision-makers, the 'contention' is coming from?	From within/institutional – other state actors
	From below – civil society actors
	From outside – international development actors and partners, market
Object of the 'contention' – What to account for? What is being claimed?	Transparency, monitoring and evaluation, policy coordination, participation, outcomes, etc.
Actors in the 'contention' – Who is negotiating accountability? Who is being asked to provide an account?	Line-ministries, other state actors, development partners, traditional donors, international organisations, national civil society, international civil society, etc.
Level - Where is this 'contention' taking place? Where is this accountability arrangement located?	National or global? What country? What global policy space?
Types of accountability (1) – Why to account? What is the source of the obligation or directionality?	Horizontal, vertical, diagonal
Types of accountability (2) – To whom?	Partner government (country B), State institutions in country A, citizens in country A, citizens in country B, international development community, public in general
Types of accountability (3) – What to account for?	Financial accountability, procedural accountability, and product accountability

Table 3 – Researching SSC accountability politics: thematic clustering

Theme	Points/site of contention	Research site
Quantification, results, and evidence	SSC reporting, measurement, and evaluation initiatives (e.g the COBRADI report developed by the Brazilian Cooperation Agency and IPEA)	Brazil
	Showcasing-results from a trilateral cooperation (e.g WFP-Centre for Excellence Against Hunger)	Brazil
	Network of Southern Think-Tanks – NeST negotiating common frameworks for conceptualizing, measuring, monitoring, and evaluating SSC	NeST
Participation	Policy-level: Formal and informal state-society interfaces (e.g. Food and Nutritional Security Council)	Brazil
	Policy-level: Citizen participation through the Indian Forum for Development Cooperation	India
	Project-level: Cross-regional civil society alliances (e.g. No to Pro-Savana Campaign)	Brazil
	Project-level: Citizen participation in the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor Consultations	India
	Policy-level: Negotiating New Development Bank policies for consultation with civil society and project-affected communities	NDB
Socio-environmental norms	Setting-up BNDES socio-environmental norms for overseas investments	Brazil
	Setting-up environmental safeguards in Indian concessional loans and the role of the DFID-India working group	India
	Setting-up socio-environmental norms for NDB's funding of sustainable infrastructure	NDB

3. A note on writing from within *SSC-land* and from Cambridge

My positionality is multifaceted, not least due to the multi-sited nature of this research. When engaging my participants in the field, I presented myself as a Brazilian SSC expert *and* a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge.[641] Being a Brazilian researcher and a practitioner in the field of SSC since 2011 and a doctoral researcher in a prestigious Northern university, worked most of the times as an enabler to me. My previous belonging to *SSC-land*—both as a 'critic' and as a 'programmer', in Tania Li's (2007) words—often made me an insider 'studying my own tribe' (Prashant Sharma 2014, 30). This granted me access to institutions, their staff, and to documents,[642] but also meant I had first-hand experiences of some of the processes I was tracing or was part of social and policy networks I was inquiring about. Whereas the role of scholars in the analytical obsession with public accountability 'gaps' is widely recognised (e.g. Flinders 2014), in my case another boundary had been crossed by actively working along the academic-policy lines: I had published policy pieces about issues I was now asking people about or had participated in SSC evaluations I was now academically assessing. I suppose that most of my Brazilian participants perceived me as this hybrid research-activist, something I have never tried to hide or underplay. In a way it also explained—to them, as much as to myself—my interest in SSC accountability as a research topic. My positionalities in India or China were more straightforward, yet still plural. I was mainly an outsider, a young white woman that could mobilise either the 'Brazilian researcher-practitioner credential' or the 'Cambridge PhD student' as convenient.

My relation to each of the three countries was uniquely distinct and so was my research access. I had greater access in Brazil, due to my nationality and years-long professional and social connections in *SSC-land* and in Brazilian foreign policy and public policy circles, more broadly. In India, a country I visited for the first time in 2012 and have since returned periodically for short-research and policy advocacy trips, I have relied on my established connections to certain stakeholders working on Indian development cooperation (mostly in academia and civil society). The Indian SSC community remains a comparatively small one (Chenoy and Joshi 2016) and often these contacts have subsequently facilitated (formally or informally) my access to more closed policy spaces, such as governmental institutions. China is the site where I had the most limited access and connections. My previous engagement was significantly more superficial, having conducted China-related research previously but visited the country for the first time in 2017 to attend two academic conferences just before joining the PhD. Since, I have returned annually for a series of academic and policy events in Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong, where I also conducted my fieldwork. Lacking a wide network of connections and the language skills, I relied on development practitioners and academics I had previously

[641] In my introductions I often referred to the differentiation languages like Portuguese or Spanish allow for in the verb 'to be' between a nature of something *(ser)* and a state of being (*estar*).

[642] For instance, I have formally or informally met several of ABC staff. Others researching SSC before me have traditionally described Brazilian cooperation bureaucracy as open, but this has somehow changed in the recent years—in particular for ABC—following the increase of scrutiny on their work, particularly in the wake of the ProSavana controversy (Cesarino 2019; INT-BR-20; INT-BR-53).

met and on the valuable in-country network of my Cambridge colleagues as to get insights into policymaking dynamics.

In all three countries, I also reached out to research participants I had never spoken to or met before. I believe my multiple identities—as a Brazilian having worked and participated in the field and my acquired Cambridge credentials, including being under the supervision of a Northern researcher widely accepted in Southern-led policy and research spaces—have worked to enable my access to new actors. I have extensively played on these multiple positionalities, using it in a rather plastic way, to gain access to information. I have also played, not without risking reifying strong and toxic social and knowledge-production power asymmetries, on my both young and female researcher to create 'no-threatening' exchanges spaces with often male dominated policy circles (S.-M. Kim 2019). While doing so I have often relied on less formality-charged interview settings with my research participants, enabling two-way conversations to appear and flow. The topic of accountability has itself generated opportunities for participants to ask me what *I* understood as accountability or how was *I* conceptually framing this issue, reinforcing the widely acknowledged conceptual breadth of the term, in its global/English rendition, but also its knowledge politics. Interviews were also rich moments of self and join reflections about the field, its shifting dynamics, or the role of Southern (critical) researchers and its tensions. Those were 'candid conversations with colleagues' (Mosse 2005, 13). In some cases, particularly with Brazilians and sometimes with Indians, interviews were charged with unsettling nostalgia about past dynamics and/or uncertainty about the future.

Researching plurality and unfolding change

Researching *SSC-land* is to deal with plurality, complex institutional frameworks, and change. SSC remains a fragmented, non-centralised policy agenda in most of the countries, which implies having to navigate several 'SSC bureaucracies', and those who inhabit them, at the same time. For many of them, SSC—or 'the international work' and within that SSC—was a marginal agenda. While doing my PhD I was constantly confronted with the challenges of studying 'emerging', 'in-the-making' (Cesarino 2013; Cabral 2016), 'shifting' (Mawdsley 2019a), and even 'retreating' SSC processes (Suyama, Waisbich and Leite 2016; Abdenur 2018).

On the one hand, this meant tracing processes and movements that were still unfolding[643] and, in the case of Brazil, it meant studying rapidly shifting, if not eroding, dismantling SSC policies. A field Cesarino (2019) recently described as an 'unstable ground', full of 'ebbs and flows'. Despite focusing my research on contemporary SSC, many spoke to me in the past tense (longing for what has no longer there) or in a

[643] A reflection I have come to appreciate while reading (Platzky 2020) doctoral research on contemporary social movements in Brazil and South Africa.

cautious present tense (uncertain about the implications of ongoing changes), the latter being true for Brazilian, Chinese, and Indian interlocutors. This forced distance has freed some participants to critically reflect on the issues and on their own positions, preferences, and actions. I wanted my conversations over accountability also to be reflections on institutional and individual learnings, and in some cases, they were.

These changing landscapes borne, nonetheless, conceptual, methodological, and political implications. Once, when presenting an excerpt of my research to a mostly Brazilian audience, one researcher asked me why I was not using the past tense to refer to my research. Her question echoed my own lingering concerns about my moving-topic and to the speed it was becoming an historical research object. At the time I responded that while part of my research belonged to the recent past there were dimensions of Brazilian SSC that were still in place under different circumstances. I tried to sound convincing to that audience, but this discomfort never left me. Even if policy and institutional changes have also touched India and China's SSC ecosystems, Brazilian politics and international engagements are substantially different from the ones that characterised the previous expansionary phase. The scenario today is also different from the 'retreat moment experienced' under Rousseff's or from the 'turn-to-the-right' following her impeachment (Amorim 2016; Suyama, Waisbich and Leite 2016). In last than two decades Brazil went from middle-power, to emerging-power, and to middle-power again, in a process of 'status downgrading' (Casarões 2020). The anti-globalisation nationalist wave that covered part of the West has also reached Brazil since the far-right president, Jair Bolsonaro, took power in 2019. The implications are manyfold. The role of presidents in shaping Brazilian foreign policy is widely acknowledged in the literature and matters greatly to how Brazilian global projection (Cason and Power 2009). However, Bolsonaro's election is unique due to the extreme political-ideological shift it represents from past governments and to his views on world affairs, including a strong dismissal of the South-South axis that guided Brazilian foreign policy during the Workers Party era.

While disputes around Brazilian 'Southern credentials' and its SSC are constitutive of country's domestic accountability politics and did not start with Bolsonaro (Waisbich 2020b; also Chapter 5), the current shifts matter to the symbolic battles being fought around global development. Understanding these shifting dynamics under an extremely polarised (when not toxic) environment is the task of scholars like myself. While doing so, we are invited to critically reflect on the ways academics and practitioners have embarked on an overly enthusiastic journey about the SSC agenda in the recent past and to carve a new place for critical SSC thinking in the current context paying attention to the gaps between visible discursive changes and their practical translations and to the counter-movements happening below-the-radar within SSC bureaucracies. Above all, is about reflecting on change while recognising that 'commitments to SSC cannot simply be rolled back to the *status quo ante'* (D. Marcondes and Mawdsley 2017, 698–99) and that SSC accountability politics are to some degree and form here to stay.

4. List of Interviews and List of Institutions

Interview ID	Institution Type	Country	Type	Interview code
Interviewee 1	National NGO	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-1
Interviewee 2	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-2
Interviewee 3	Academic/Think-Tank	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-3
Interviewee 4	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-4
Interviewee 5	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-5
Interviewee 6	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-6
Interviewee 7	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-7
Interviewee 8	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-8
Interviewee 9	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-9
Interviewee 10	Academic/Think-Tank	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-10
Interviewee 11	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-11
Interviewee 12	National NGO	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-12
Interviewee 13	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-13
Interviewee 14	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-14
Interviewee 15	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-15
Interviewee 16	International organisation	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-16
Interviewee 17	International organisation	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-17
Interviewee 18	Academic/Think-Tank	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-18
Interviewee 19	International organisation	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-19
Interviewee 20	Academic/Think-Tank	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-20
Interviewee 21	International NGO	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-21
Interviewee 22	National NGO	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-22
Interviewee 23	Academic/Think-Tank	Brazil	Informal	INT-BR-23
Interviewee 24	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-24
Interviewee 25	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-25
Interviewee 26	International organisation	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-26
Interviewee 27	National NGO	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-27
Interviewee 28	Government institution	Brazil	Informal	INT-BR-28
Interviewee 29	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-29
Interviewee 30	Government institution	Brazil	Informal	INT-BR-30
Interviewee 31	Academic/Think-Tank	Brazil	Informal	INT-BR-31
Interviewee 32	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-32
Interviewee 33	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-33
Interviewee 34	Government institution	Brazil	Informal	INT-BR-34
Interviewee 35	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-35
Interviewee 36	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-36
Interviewee 37	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-37
Interviewee 38	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-38
Interviewee 39	Government institution	Brazil	Informal	INT-BR-39
Interviewee 40	Academic/Think-Tank	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-40
Interviewee 41	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-41
Interviewee 42	Academic/Think-Tank	Brazil	Informal	INT-BR-42
Interviewee 43	Academic/Think-Tank	Brazil	Informal	INT-BR-43
Interviewee 44	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-44
Interviewee 45	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-45
Interviewee 46	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-46
Interviewee 47	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-47
Interviewee 48	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-48
Interviewee 49	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-49
Interviewee 50	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-50
Interviewee 51	National NGO	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-51
Interviewee 52	International organisation	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-52
Interviewee 53	Academic/Think-Tank	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-53
Interviewee 54	International NGO	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-54
Interviewee 55	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-55
Interviewee 56	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-56
Interviewee 57	Academic/Think-Tank	Brazil	Informal	INT-BR-57
Interviewee 58	Academic/Think-Tank	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-58
Interviewee 59	Academic/Think-Tank	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-59
Interviewee 60	Academic/Think-Tank	Brazil	Informal	INT-BR-60
Interviewee 61	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-61
Interviewee 62	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-62
Interviewee 63	National NGO	Brazil	Informal	INT-BR-63
Interviewee 64	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-64
Interviewee 65	International organisation	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-65
Interviewee 66	Academic/Think-Tank	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-66
Interviewee 67	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-67
Interviewee 68	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-68
Interviewee 69	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-69
Interviewee 70	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-70
Interviewee 71	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-71
Interviewee 72	Academic/Think-Tank	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-72

Interviewee 73	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-73
Interviewee 74	Government institution	Brazil	Semi-Structured	INT-BR-74
Interviewee 75	National NGO	China	Semi-Structured	INT-CH-1
Interviewee 76	International NGO	China	Informal	INT-CH-2
Interviewee 77	Academic/Think-Tank	China	Semi-Structured	INT-CH-3
Interviewee 78	Academic/Think-Tank	China	Semi-Structured	INT-CH-4
Interviewee 79	Academic/Think-Tank	China	Semi-Structured	INT-CH-5
Interviewee 80	Academic/Think-Tank	China	Informal	INT-CH-6
Interviewee 81	International NGO	China	Semi-Structured	INT-CH-7
Interviewee 82	International NGO	China	Informal	INT-CH-8
Interviewee 83	International NGO	China	Informal	INT-CH-9
Interviewee 84	International NGO	China	Informal	INT-CH-10
Interviewee 85	Academic/Think-Tank	China	Informal	INT-CH-11
Interviewee 86	International organisation	China	Semi-Structured	INT-CH-12
Interviewee 87	Government institution	China	Semi-Structured	INT-CH-13
Interviewee 88	Government institution	China	Semi-Structured	INT-CH-14
Interviewee 89	International organisation	China	Semi-Structured	INT-CH-15
Interviewee 90	International NGO	China	Informal	INT-CH-16
Interviewee 91	Academic/Think-Tank	China	Informal	INT-CH-17
Interviewee 92	Academic/Think-Tank	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-1
Interviewee 93	National NGO	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-2
Interviewee 94	National NGO	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-3
Interviewee 95	International NGO	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-4
Interviewee 96	Academic/Think-Tank	India	Informal	INT-IN-5
Interviewee 97	International NGO	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-6
Interviewee 98	Academic/Think-Tank	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-7
Interviewee 99	National NGO	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-8
Interviewee 100	Academic/Think-Tank	India	Informal	INT-IN-9
Interviewee 101	National NGO	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-10
Interviewee 102	Academic/Think-Tank	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-11
Interviewee 103	International NGO	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-12
Interviewee 104	Government institution	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-13
Interviewee 105	National NGO	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-14
Interviewee 106	Government institution	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-15
Interviewee 107	Academic/Think-Tank	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-16
Interviewee 108	Government institution	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-17
Interviewee 109	Academic/Think-Tank	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-18
Interviewee 110	International NGO	India	Informal	INT-IN-19
Interviewee 111	Academic/Think-Tank	India	Semi-Structured	INT-IN-20
Interviewee 112	Academic/Think-Tank	India	Informal	INT-IN-21
Interviewee 113	Academic/Think-Tank	Other development partner	Informal	INT-ODP-1
Interviewee 114	Academic/Think-Tank	Other development partner	Informal	INT-ODP-2
Interviewee 115	Traditional donor	Other development partner	Informal	INT-ODP-3
Interviewee 116	International organisation	Other development partner	Semi-Structured	INT-ODP-4
Interviewee 117	Traditional donor	Other development partner	Semi-Structured	INT-ODP-5
Interviewee 118	Traditional donor	Other development partner	Semi-Structured	INT-ODP-6
Interviewee 119	Traditional donor	Other development partner	Semi-Structured	INT-ODP-7
Interviewee 120	Traditional donor	Other development partner	Semi-Structured	INT-ODP-8
Interviewee 121	International organisation	Other SSC actors	Semi-Structured	INT-OSS-1
Interviewee 122	Academic/Think-Tank	Other SSC actors	Semi-Structured	INT-OSS-2
Interviewee 123	Government institution	Other SSC actors	Semi-Structured	INT-OSS-3
Interviewee 124	International organisation	Other SSC actors	Semi-Structured	INT-OSS-4
Interviewee 125	International NGO	Other SSC actors	Semi-Structured	INT-OSS-5
Interviewee 126	Government institution	Other SSC actors	Semi-Structured	INT-OSS-6
Interviewee 127	Academic/Think-Tank	Other SSC actors	Semi-Structured	INT-OSS-7
Interviewee 128	Academic/Think-Tank	Other SSC actors	Informal	INT-OSS-8
Interviewee 129	Academic/Think-Tank	Other SSC actors	Informal	INT-OSS-9
Interviewee 130	International organisation	Other SSC actors	Informal	INT-OSS-10
Interviewee 131	Academic/Think-Tank	Other SSC actors	Informal	INT-OSS-11
Interviewee 132	Academic/Think-Tank	Other SSC actors	Semi-Structured	INT-OSS-12
Interviewee 133	International organisation	Other SSC actors	Semi-Structured	INT-OSS-13
Interviewee 134	Government institution	Other SSC actors	Semi-Structured	INT-OSS-14
Interviewee 135	Academic/Think-Tank	Other SSC actors	Semi-Structured	INT-OSS-15
Interviewee 136	International organisation	Other SSC actors	Semi-Structured	INT-OSS-16
Interviewee 137	International organisation	Other SSC actors	Semi-Structured	INT-OSS-17

	Country
Australian National University	Australia
BNDES - Brazilian National Development Bank	Brazil
Conectas Human Rights	Brazil
Embrapa - Brazilian Agricultural Research Company	Brazil
ESG – Brazilian War College	Brazil
FASE - Federation of Organs for Social and Educational Assistance	Brazil
Federal University of Santa Catarina	Brazil
FGV - Getúlio Vargas Foundation	Brazil
FNDE - National Fund for Educational Development, Government of Brazil	Brazil
IBASE - Brazilian Institute of Social and Economic Analysis	Brazil
INESC - Institute for Socioeconomic Studies	Brazil
IPEA - Institute of Economic Applied Research	Brazil
Ministry of Education, Government of Brazil	Brazil
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Brazil	Brazil
Ministry of Health, Government of Brazil	Brazil
Ministry of Justice, Government of Brazil	Brazil
Nike Consultoria	Brazil
PUC-Rio - Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro	Brazil
SAGI - Office of Evaluation and Information Management, Government of Brazil	Brazil
SESAN - Food and Nutritional Security Secretary, Government of Brazil	Brazil
TCU - Federal Court of Accounts	Brazil
University of Brasília, Brazil	Brazil
ABC - Brazilian Cooperation Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Brazil
Anonymous UN agency in Brazil	Brazil
Articulação SUL - South-South Cooperation Research and Policy Centre	Brazil
Cebrap - Brazilian Centre for Analysis and Planning	Brazil
CERESAN - Reference Center on Food and Nutrition Sovereignty and Security, Rural Federal University of Rio de Janeiro	Brazil
CGFome - Former General-Coordination of International Action against Hunger, Government of Brazil	Brazil
CGU - Office of the Comptroller General	Brazil
DIEESE - Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socio-Economic Studies	Brazil
ENAP – National Public Administration School	Brazil
Strategic Affairs Secretariat, Presidency Office, Government of Brazil	Brazil
China Agriculture University	China
CIKD - China Centre for International Knowledge on Development	China
Greenovation Hub	China
Greenpeace China	China
International Institute of Green Finance	China
Renmin University of China	China
Embassy of France to India	France
Heinrich Böll Foundation India	Germany
Oxfam Hong Kong	Hong Kong
Centre for Policy Research	India
Export-Import Bank of India	India
Jawaharlal Nehru University	India
Praxis Institute	India
PRIA - Society for Participatory Research In Asia	India
Action Aid India	India
Centre for Financial Accountability	India
Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India	India
O.P. Jindal Global University	India
Observer Research Foundation	India
Oxfam India	India
PWESCR - Programme on Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	India
RIS - Research and Information System for Developing Countries	India
United Nations Development Programme in Mexico	International
BRICS Feminist Watch	International
DAWN - Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era	International
Food and Agriculture Organisation in Brazil	International
International Budget Partnership	International
IPC-IG - International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth	International
New Development Bank	International
OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development	International
Southern Voice	International
The Asia Foundation China	International
The Asia Foundation India	International
United Nations Development Programme in Brazil	International
United Nations Development Programme in China	International
WFP CEAH - World Food Programme Centre of Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil	International
AMEXCID - Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation	Mexico
Oxfam Mexico	Mexico
N'weti, Mozambique	Mozambique
IGD - Institute for Global Dialogue	South Africa
National School of Government	South Africa
Oxfam South Africa	South Africa
SAIIA - South African Institute of International Affairs	South Africa

University of Pretoria	South Africa
University of the Western Cape	South Africa
University of Cambridge	United Kingdom
University of Manchester	United Kingdom
Development Initiatives	United Kingdom
Global Witness	United Kingdom
United Kingdom Department for International Development Office in Brazil	United Kingdom
United Kingdom Department for International Development Office in India	United Kingdom
University of Oklahoma	United States

5. Table of Evaluations of South-South cooperation (Brazil, China, India)

Project name	Year	Nature	Authorship	Public availability	Country
Brazil-FAO-WFP Purchase from Africans for Africa (PAA Africa)	2014	Learning and results report	PAA Africa programme	Yes	Brazil
Supporting the development of the cotton sector in the C4 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mali) - Cotton-4'	2015	External *ex post* evaluation	Articulação SUL; PLAN	Yes	Brazil
Brazil-WFP contribution to Mozambique's National School Feeding Programme (PRONAE)	2015	Independent assessment	Action Aid Brasil	Yes	Brazil
Brazil-WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger interventions (2011-2016)	2016	External *ex post* evaluation	Articulação SUL; Move Social	Yes	Brazil
ABC-JICA-UNSSOSSC Capacity Development in Management of South-South and Triangular Cooperation	2016	Internal *ex post* evaluation with external consultants	Commissioned to individual external consultant	No	Brazil
Brazil-UNICEF Trilateral South-South Cooperation Programme	2016	Learning and results report	Commissioned to individual external consultant	Yes	Brazil
"Memories of ProSavana"	2016	Independent assessment - civil society organisation study	FASE, Brazil	Yes	Brazil
"Advancing South-South Cooperation in Education and Skills Development"	2016	Independent assessment - based on NeST evaluation framework	Brazilian Center for International Relations - CEBRI, Brazil	Yes	Brazil
Brazil-ILO South-South Cooperation for the Promotion of Decent Work in Cotton-Producing Countries in Africa and Latin America	2017	Internal evaluability assessment	Commissioned to individual external consultant	No	Brazil
Brazil-FAO-WFP Purchase from Africans for Africa (PAA Africa) Senegal	2017	PAA Decentralised Evaluation	Commissioned to individual external consultant	Yes	Brazil
Brazil-FAO Support to National and Sub-regional Strategies for Food and Nutritional Security and Overcoming Poverty in Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean	2018	Review	Commissioned to individual external consultant	No	Brazil
Brazil-FAO-WFP Purchase from Africans for Africa (PAA Africa) Malawi	2018	PAA Decentralised Evaluation	Commissioned to individual external consultant	Yes	Brazil
Brazil-WFP contribution to Mozambique's National School Feeding Programme (PRONAE)	2018	PAA Decentralised Evaluation	FAO and International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth - IPC-IG	Yes	Brazil
Cooperation Brazil-Cuba-Haiti for Strengthening the Haitian Health System	2018	External *ex post* evaluation	Commissioned to individual external consultant	No	Brazil
Brazil-UNICEF Trilateral South-South Cooperation Programme	2019	External *ex post* evaluation	Articulação SUL	Yes	Brazil
Cotton Shire Zambeze (Malawi and Mozambique)	2020	External *ex post* evaluation	Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation - Embrapa, Brazil; International Center for Tropical Agriculture - CIAT, Colombia	No	Brazil
Cotton Vitoria (Kenya, Tanzania and Burundi)	2020	Internal *ex post* evaluation	Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation - Embrapa, Brazil	No	Brazil
SENAI vocational educational training centres (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, East Timor, Paraguay, Colombia)	2011-2016	Internal evaluation missions and reviews	National Service for Industrial Training - SENAI, Brazil	No	Brazil
Brazil-FAO Strengthening School Feeding Programmes in the Framework of the Zero Hunger	2016-2017	Review	Commissioned to individual external consultant	No	Brazil

Initiative in Latin America and the Caribbean 2025					
"Perceptions on China-Lao Agricultural Investments"	2015	Independent assessment - civil society organisation study	Oxfam Hong Kong	Yes	China
China-UNFPA partnership on South-South and Global Cooperation	2016	Internal mid-review	UNFPA China	No	China
"A Civil Perspective on China's Aid to Cambodia"	2016	Independent assessment - civil society organisation study	The Asia Foundation	Yes	China
China-Tanzania Cooperation in agriculture	2018	Independent assessment - with UNOSSC grant, based on NeST evaluation framework	China Institute for South-South Cooperation in Agriculture - CISSCA, China	Yes	China
"The case China-Pakistan Economic Corridor"	2018	Independent assessment - based on NeST evaluation framework	German Development Institute - DiE, Germany	Yes	China
China-UNFPA South-South & Triangular Cooperation (2016-2019)	2019	Internal final-review	UNFPA China	No	China
Nepal Small Development Projects	2013	Independent assessment - governmental think tank study	Research and Information System for Developing Countries - RIS, India	No	India
"India's Development Cooperation with Ethiopia in Sugar Production"	2015	Independent assessment - governmental think tank study	Research and Information System for Developing Countries - RIS, India	Yes	India
"India's Development Cooperation with Bangladesh: A Focus on Lines of Credit"	2017	Independent assessment - civil society organisation study	Participatory Research in Asia - PRIA, India	Yes	India
A case study on Indo-Bangla Lines of Credit'	2019	Independent assessment - civil society organisation study with UNOSSC grant	Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh	Yes	India
"Case Study on India and Mozambique: Solar Technology"	2019	Independent assessment - based on NeST evaluation framework with UNOSSC grant	Research and Information System for Developing Countries - RIS, India	Yes	India
"A case study of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme"	2020	Independent assessment - civil society organisation study with UNOSSC grant	Public Affairs Centre, India	No	India

Source: author's own elaboration

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