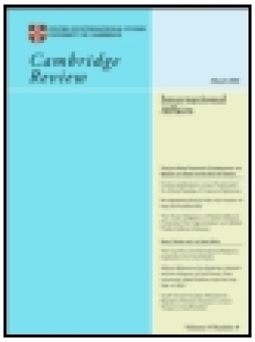

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Development cooperation, the international–domestic nexus and the graduation dilemma: comparing South Africa and Brazil

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Abstract *Development cooperation is a foreign policy tool marked by deep-seated conflicts of interest and dilemmas of particular relevance to second-tier and non-nuclear countries that aim to change their international status and role. Building on the concept of 'graduation dilemma', this article compares specific dilemmas that Brazil and South Africa face in their foreign policies concerning the development cooperation agenda at three levels: the domestic, the regional and the global level. The research question guiding this analysis is: how does the graduation dilemma manifest in relation to Brazil and South Africa's role in development cooperation?*

Introduction

Development cooperation is as a particularly poignant example of the complexities and dilemmas facing decision-makers in states that seek to signal their ascendance both regionally and globally. Whilst becoming known as an emerging donor in the world of development cooperation could be considered an example of status signalling (Larson et al 2014), at the same time it also involves some risk.[1] Recognition as a donor could lead to losing or reducing material and symbolic benefits as an official development assistance (ODA) recipient and a peer of other developing countries, even if many 'emerging donors' from the South are not officially members of the Organization for

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[1] Diplomatic activity, rhetoric and membership of diplomatic clubs are examples of status signals whereby states signal their status claims. However, since states signal to multiple audiences (domestic and regional), status signalling is also subject to misperception and miscommunication (Larson et al 2014, 22).

Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). For two of the world's most unequal societies, Brazil and South Africa, the dual identity of being both a *recipient* of ODA and a *provider* of development cooperation packages creates multiple dilemmas. For example, the announcement by the UK's Department of International Development (DFID) that it would scale down its assistance programmes to South Africa in 2015 prompted a reactive démarche by the South African Finance Minister and media concerns that South Africa's announced new role in development cooperation was likely to lead to reduced foreign aid (Langeni 2010; Tran 2014). Similarly, when Brazil started portraying a more dynamic role in development cooperation, its government could hardly justify domestically that many Latin American countries with better social indicators might end up benefiting from projects that were completely funded by the Brazilian government until at least August 2012 (Milani 2017, 53).

These tensions and contradictions are indicative of the graduation dilemma that some second-tier and non-nuclear powers in the developing world are confronted with.[2] In order to clarify this notion, we must first understand what 'graduation' refers to in our analysis. In development economics literature, 'graduation' refers to a change in a country's economic status and therefore in its possibilities of benefiting from advantageous packages in trade, aid and development funding mechanisms. In this sense graduation is a step forward, a status defined by international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, after which a country's national government can no longer have access to benefits such as trade facilitation schemes, special financial assistance or reduced interest rates. Influenced by such literature, graduation is often conceived as a result, and not as a process. When using the concept of graduation, many social scientists (some of them inspired by Walt W Rostow's concept of 'takeoff') may have adopted a misleading linear conception of history, as if once a country has graduated it cannot lose its economic capacity and power projection resources. Graduation is here conceptualized not as a result, but as a process and a trajectory the outcome of which is not historically irreversible (Milani et al 2017, 589).

How should we define 'graduation' and avoid a conception rooted in non-historical and linear national trajectories? Drawing on Milani et al (2017, 590), this article analyses graduation as a historical *process of change* in international hierarchy. As such, this article identifies scale and status in three socio-political spaces: (1) in the power core of global institutions (going from being a rule-taker to being a rule-maker; occupying a veto position in international institutions); (2) in the international political economy (a country's weight in international trade; the regional and global importance of its gross domestic product [GDP]; its strategic economic assets); and (3) in the socialization

[2] Second-tier countries are not global powers in the international hierarchy, and do not participate in the main global governance decision-making processes in the fields of security, economics and finance. However, they have reached a relevant degree of material differentiation in comparison with other developing countries to aspire to change their normative role from norm-takers to norm-makers in international relations. They are not seeking international primacy, but they have a clear ambition to rise in, and redefine, international hierarchies. We follow Milani et al (2017) and assume that nuclear weapons have political effects that give their holders a veto power in international negotiations, whereas non-nuclear states have to rely on pacific means or soft power to fulfil their international ambitions.

amongst states, as the country's graduated status is recognized by the dominant powers and its peers.

In our framework, graduation implies not exclusively an ambition to move upwards in a hierarchy, but also a political drive to revise the rules in international development cooperation (IDC). We operationalize graduation in terms of the following. First, relative material capabilities (for example, economic, technological, military), vis-à-vis regional others, which requires some degree of differentiation with respect to the projected 'peripheral' others. Second, political will, expressed in the graduation choices, through the country's foreign policy, government decisions and development model. Third, recognition by the major powers and regional peers or developing partners. Fourth, cohesion among government elites and strategic elites (including businesses, trade unions, mainstream media, academia, civil society organizations) in support of graduation. Fifth, the existence of societal backing for the graduation process, including the inherent costs of graduation (for example, greater involvement in global issues, international cooperation) and electoral support for the graduation policy platforms inevitably associated with greater international ambition (Milani et al 2017).

However, why does graduation generate dilemmas for second-tier and non-nuclear powers? This article contends that the graduation process generates dilemmas relating to the risks, uncertainties and tensions produced at the three levels traditionally invoked in foreign policy analysis, namely the domestic, regional and global or systemic level. At each level, constituencies of development cooperation providers project different interests, expectations and levels of commitment that complicate its use as a foreign policy tool, particularly when the domestic institutions and norms governing development cooperation are not consolidated. Risks and uncertainties are also associated with external economic vulnerabilities that impact on the country's capabilities in the implementation of its development cooperation agenda. These include, firstly, the lack of institutional capacities to ensure continuity and evaluation of projects; secondly, the absence of a larger domestic coalition of support for the country's development cooperation policies; and, finally, international recognition by both major powers and regional peers.

The conceptual framework having been presented, the research question guiding this analysis is: how does the graduation dilemma manifest in relation to Brazil's and South Africa's role in development cooperation? Accordingly, the focus of this article is directed upon the tensions and contradictions that flow from the graduation dilemma, rather than providing extensive data about Brazil and South Africa's development cooperation programmes (Abdenur 2014; Besharati 2013a; Burges 2008; Bergamasci et al 2017; Chaturvedi et al 2012; Suyama et al 2016).

Whilst the vastness of South–South development cooperation (SSC) literature cannot be reviewed here (Bräutigam 2011; Burges 2014; Chaturvedi et al 2012; Chisholm and Steiner-Khamsi 2009; Duarte 2014; Mawdsley 2012; Six 2009; Zimmerman and Smith 2011; Gu et al 2016), this article's main contribution to development cooperation and SSC debates lies in framing this foreign policy agenda as part and parcel of a second-tier and non-nuclear power's graduation dilemma. It does that by offering an innovative analytical architecture through a comparative methodology. The comparative case study research design draws on the relevant secondary literature and is supplemented with interviews with key stakeholders, such as diplomats and think tank analysts. Temporally, our analysis focuses on the transition between the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries, particularly since the presidencies of Thabo Mbeki (1999–2012) in South Africa and Lula da Silva (2003–2010) in Brazil.

The article is structured around five sections. The first section provides an empirical overview of the nuts and bolts of South Africa's and Brazil's development cooperation programmes. The second delineates the complexities and dilemmas of graduation at the national level, through an analysis of domestic politics, government supporting coalitions, and issues regarding the institutionalization of development cooperation programmes. The third analyses the regional level, where normative concerns (to demonstrate 'solidarity' or 'leadership') often drive development cooperation projects. Yet these also generate costs to the construction of regional leadership. The fourth section focuses on the global level, scrutinizing Brazil's and South Africa's motivations to provide development cooperation as a demand for *recognition and status* which requires balancing regional obligations and global aspirations. Before concluding, we analyse similarities and differences between Brazil and South Africa in relation to four issues, namely (i) policy transfer, (ii) economic interests, (iii) institutionalization and (iv) domestic politics and support coalitions.

As we shall demonstrate, tensions and contradictions between the three levels brush against each other, thus creating the dilemmas associated with graduation. At the domestic level, some constituencies (parliament, mainstream media, think tanks) expect development cooperation programmes to display national benefits, thus arguing that development cooperation should be more results oriented and less 'ideological' in its purposes. However, what some domestic constituencies regard as 'ideological projects' refers to principles of solidarity and norms of horizontal cooperation that may be crucial to boost political legitimacy at the regional level, with other developing countries. Similarly, international recognition of Brazil and South Africa's roles may also 'push' Brasilia and Pretoria into global responsibilities and/or modes of involvement that they would otherwise prefer to avoid. At the same time, as voices of the South, Brazil's and South Africa's development cooperation programmes need to differentiate themselves from OECD-DAC (Development Assistance Committee) approaches, lest their efforts run into legitimacy problems at the regional or even domestic level of analysis. In short, foreign policymakers in both Brasilia and Pretoria end up being constrained at all three levels—the domestic, the regional and the global—hence ever more complexities relating to the graduation dilemma in the particular field of development cooperation.

Contextualizing the evolution of Brazil's and South Africa's development cooperation programmes

In the case of Brazil, the first technical cooperation programmes with other developing countries started in the 1970s. However, it was only at the beginning of the process of re-democratization in September 1987 that the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (Agência Brasileira de Cooperação [ABC]) was created. This implied the resumption by the Itamaraty (as Brazil's Ministry of Foreign

Affairs is known) of its role in both providing and receiving development cooperation. Brazil's governmental funding to cooperation has grown since the 1988 Constitution along with the political interest in this agenda. International development cooperation incrementally followed the expansion of domestic social policies and the modernizing reforms of Brazil's public administration.

In broader terms, the transition from the presidency of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995–2002) to Lula da Silva (2003–2010) and then to Dilma Rousseff (2011–2014) represented the continuity of the 1988 Constitution political pact, consensus on macroeconomic stability, and respect for the democratic rule of law, as well as the implementation of creative and inclusive social policies, particularly in the field of poverty reduction. As each president had his/her own idiosyncrasies in terms of building coalitions, dealing with business and social movements or relating to the mass media, this also extended to the way that they projected Brazil's political ambitions and roles on the international scene.

During Cardoso's mandates (1995–2002), Brazil was known for its international advocacy in the public health sector, particularly concerning HIV AIDS treatment access. Under the label of 'prestige diplomacy' Brazil's foreign policy ratified important human rights agreements, championed environmental multilateralism, and endorsed 'Third Way' social programs (Lima 2017). Latin American and African Portuguese-speaking countries were the main recipients of Brazil's cooperation agenda (Puentes 2010). In 1996 Cardoso supported the creation of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP). With Latin America and the Caribbean, cooperation was considered a tool for building Brazilian regional leadership (Valler Filho 2007). However, development cooperation was not a key strategic foreign policy agenda during Cardoso's years. ABC did not enjoy great political and budgetary relevance, except during the last year of his mandate in 2002: in 2001, ABC's budget represented 0.05 per cent of Itamaraty's overall budget, whereas in 2002 it was 0.48 per cent (Milani 2017, 45).

Under the Workers' Party (PT) governments, Brazil's renewed diplomatic profile improved its role and participation as a provider of IDC. Official data show that in nine years, between 2005 and 2013, Brazil's federal government spent approximately US$4.1 billion on IDC. Geographically speaking, Brazilian cooperation has concentrated on two main regions: Latin America and Africa (mostly, Portuguese-speaking countries).[3] These figures show that Brazil has accelerated its engagement with SSC activities. Even though the size of Brazilian IDC is not large by OECD-DAC standards, the country's numbers are expressive, particularly in comparison with other developing countries. For instance, in 2011 Brazil spent approximately US$588 million, whereas South Africa spent US$229 million, Mexico US$99 million, Chile US$24 million,

[3] Brazilian IDC is known as COBRADI and its main source of data is the Applied Economics Research Institute (IPEA), an important governmental think tank under the Secretariat of Strategic Affairs. IPEA and ABC, *Brazilian Cooperation for International Development 2005–2009* (Brasília: Instituto de Pesquisas Econômicas Aplicadas and Agência Brasileira de Cooperação, 2010). Two subsequent reports were published in 2013 (covering data from 2010) and 2016 (covering years 2011, 2012 and 2013). IPEA and ABC, *Cooperação Brasileira para o Desenvolvimento Internacional 2010* (Brasília: IPEA & ABC, 2013); IPEA and ABC, *Cooperação Brasileira para o Desenvolvimento Internacional 2011–2013* (Brasília: IPEA & ABC, 2016).

Colombia US$22 million and Indonesia US$19 million.[4] Such differentiation in volume from its peers is evidence of Brazil's ambition to move towards graduation in the field of IDC, even if the Brazilian government does not consider itself a 'rising donor'.

Brazil's cooperation strategies give priority to the exchange of experiences (policy practices), and emphasize the use of governmental officials, civil servants and public institutions as a primary instrument of the country's contribution to international development. Delivering technical cooperation through civil servants, from ministries and public agencies to governments in Latin America and Africa, is one of Brazil's IDC's main characteristics. However, two factors have reduced the chances of a fully fledged 'aid industry' emerging in Brazil. First, the focus of Brazil's IDC is technical cooperation. Second, due to the intergovernmental nature of Brazil's SSC, not many civil society organizations are involved in project conception or implementation.

Since the controversial impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in 2016, Michel Temer's government has significantly reduced Brazil's involvement in development cooperation, even though the diplomatic rhetoric about the relevance of Africa–Brazil cooperation ties has been left untouched. In 2016, Brasilia started serious membership negotiations with the OECD and reduced its regional profile and its support for South American integration, whilst maintaining its official rhetoric about African states' priority as international partners. The domestic political and institutional turmoil has clearly affected the country's capacity to maintain its commitments within the framework of a cohesive foreign policy both regionally and globally.

Unlike Brazil, South Africa's international development programmes can be traced back to the apartheid period and Pretoria's attempts to buy recognition and legitimacy from African states to try and reduce its isolation (Barber and Barratt 1990, 125). After apartheid, each successive president has made Africa the centre of Pretoria's foreign policy strategy, with a strong emphasis on regional development. Although numerous ministries provide development assistance, South Africa's flagship programme since 2001 has been the African Renaissance Fund (ARF), jointly managed by the Treasury and the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO). This remains the first and only programme from which principal recipients, objectives, and funded amounts can be assessed. The ARF was grafted on to the 1968 Economic Cooperation Promotion Loan Fund Act. Geographically, the predominant focus of the fund is Africa with the aim of fostering 'good governance' and 'capacity-building' with a dedication to reducing conflicts that threaten regional stability in countries like Libya, South Sudan, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Establishing a comprehensive and accurate quantitative assessment of South Africa's contribution to IDC, however, is fraught with methodological challenges. Firstly, South Africa's contributions to multilateral agencies far outstrip its bilateral aid programmes. From 2005 to 2009 nearly 90 per cent of the contributions were multilateral, including the African Union (AU), the United

[4] In quantitative terms, Brazil's 2011 IDC expenditure is less relevant than that of China (US$2.78 billion), Turkey (US$1.3 billion) or India (US$794 million). Data from OECD-DAC reports on development cooperation from 2016 and 2013.

Nations (UN), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and humanitarian aid (*Estimates of National Expenditures* 2016, 82).

Second, tracing the volume, impact and location of bilateral initiatives is nearly impossible given their dispersion amongst a multiplicity of government ministries. Moreover, apart from the expenditures of the DIRCO, these numbers are not even cited in the extensive annual *Estimates of National Expenditures*. South Africa's plethora of development assistance projects are also scattered across various parastatals such as the Development Bank of South Africa and the Industrial Development Corporation. Whilst the Treasury instructed a full audit of development cooperation initiatives in 2006, a comprehensive account has yet to emerge, with diverging academic assessments. Some contend that if expenditures such as peacekeeping and income redistribution from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) (indicators that are not accepted by DAC) are included, South Africa's total multilateral and bilateral development assistance surpasses the UN target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) (Besherati 2013, 358). However, according to traditional DAC indicators, it falls far short (O'Riordan and Stulgaitis 2016, 103). Others estimate that Pretoria spends about two billion Rand per year on various kinds of development assistance (Royeppen and Naidu 2016). For the 2016/2017 budget year, this amounted to 108.3 million Rand (approximately US$7.8 million), although the ARF only accounted for approximately three per cent of South Africa's overall development aid distributed between 2002 and 2004 (Sidiropoulos 2012, 216–242). To complicate matters further, the ARF is due to be replaced by a new agency, the South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA). The *Estimates of National Expenditures* (2016, 82) has allocated 8.8 million Rand (about US$700,000) for its creation, rising to 9.8 million Rand (about US$758,000) in 2019, whilst the budget of the ARF will be reduced by nearly 695 million Rand (about US$5.4 million) between 2017 and 2019. After the Lula/Rousseff era, the zeal with which development cooperation was flagged reduced considerably. Similarly in South Africa, by 2012 the much anticipated process to create SADPA came to a grinding halt. Its falling victim to faction fighting within the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and corruption allegations meant that the old ARF remains the bureaucratic vehicle for development cooperation (van der Westhuizen 2017).

The domestic level

Left-wing parties generally support developmentally orientated policies, whilst social democratic parties often mirror their domestic welfare regimes through international development programmes (Lancaster 2007; Thérien and Noël 2000). Accordingly, the party ideology and programme of both the ANC and the PT also reflect these characteristics, given that in both South Africa and Brazil social assistance programmes (though with different and varying approaches) are widely acknowledged to have reduced poverty (Medeiros et al 2008; Santos et al 2011; Fawkes 2017). Indeed, the initial proposal to transform the ARF into a fully fledged aid agency can be traced back to the ANC's June 2007 Conference in Polokwane and was reaffirmed at the Fourth National Policy Conference in June 2012 (ANC 2012, 45). The party's view is 'the idea of a Development Partnership is one of the key strategies that could assist the ANC and government in pursuit of our vision for a better Africa'.

In both Brazil and South Africa, foreign policy discussions beyond the state are the preserve of a small elite in civil society—academics, parliamentarians and non-governmental organization (NGO)/think tank networks—and rarely appear in public debate, even during elections. In both countries, Parliament and Congress foreign policy debates also do not appear often. When tthese issues did appear, opposition parties and think tank experts often questioned the degree to which development cooperation projects served 'national interests', whilst concerns about the human rights credentials of some recipients often framed development cooperation as an 'ideological' programme. Most development cooperation debates centred on human rights concerns, regional integration (in the case of Brazil), debates about economic self-interest and the degree to which development programmes are administered with due diligence.

In South Africa, development cooperation experts outside government criticized the lack of an overall strategy for what the country wishes to achieve with its development cooperation programme, how to do so and the need for improved monitoring and evaluation capacity in order to assess projects supported by the ARF and other ministries (Besherati 2013; Tapula et al 2011; Ford 2014). In Parliament the opposition voiced the inconsistency between South Africa's commitment to promoting democracy in Africa and a report indicating that 'R600 million had been paid from the African Renaissance Fund to Zimbabwe and R172 million to Guinea Conakry'—countries with questionable records on human rights. Disturbingly, the ARF continued to fund two more projects in Guinea in 2009, while it was under the rule of Captain (Moussa) Camara (Hartley 2010). As far as the debate about national interest is concerned, by 2012 questions were increasingly being asked by foreign policy analysts about whether South Africa was actually benefiting from its investment in conflict resolution throughout the continent, an issue we highlight in more detail in the following section.

In Brazil, during the Lula and Rousseff years, opposition parties brought to Congress debates about regional integration, the role of Venezuela in the region and what Congress-people from right-wing parties called an 'ideologization' of foreign policy. The same concerns emerged regarding Brazilian companies' role in civil construction in Latin American countries, of which the Mariel harbour in Cuba is emblematic. It is important, however, to point out that such debates in Congress also counted on the support of media outlets such as the Globo conglomerate, in an unwritten alliance with conservative movements and right-wing parties to defend the 'traditions' of Brazilian foreign policy which were seen as undermined under the PT administrations.

In fact, what these issues reveal is the lack of a domestic consensus amidst state elite, business groups, opposition parties and the media on the political relevance of Latin America and Africa on Brazil's international agendas, which posit a shortcoming in the country's ambition for international prominence (Cason and Power 2009). Data about Brazil's development cooperation show that its most significant partners in 2003 and 2016—which correspond to the years of the Lula and Rousseff administrations—were Haiti in Latin America and the Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa (Lima 2014; 2016). Irrespective of the fact that empirical evidence does not confirm the claims of opposition parties, politically their statements endorse the fact that the large coalition built by the PT was not able to bring about a domestic consensus either on domestic social policies (for instance, higher education quota policies, cash transfer programmes and indigenous peoples' rights) or on their diffusion through SSC. Both social policies and IDC programmes were identified by conservative mainstream media outlets as simply left-wing ideology and PT's partisan priorities. As a result, these policies have also met resistance from traditional oligarchies, mainly in São Paulo, and centre-right or right-wing political parties.

Indeed, Brasília attempted to use foreign policy and development cooperation strategies as political leverage to compensate for the lack of domestic convergence on social policies. Looking for international acknowledgement and deploying a strategy of diplomatic activism were instruments of legitimacy construction against conservative domestic resistance. A second difficulty stemmed from divergences on how to assess Brazil's international profile, frame its material and immaterial resources and express its capacities to play a major global role. Whereas Lula's and Dilma's foreign policy decision-makers assumed a global multipolar world in which Brazil should stress its strategic assets, conservative political parties and groups would stress Brazil's supplementary role under United States (US) leadership in the Western Hemisphere.

The regional level

Both South Africa and Brazil face the regional power paradox: while neighbours recognize that their existence may result in potential benefits (collective regional goods, such as transport or energy infrastructure, security, etc), they may also fear domination and coercive hegemonic practices. The dilemma for Brazil and South Africa resides in the need to find a middle ground between, on the one hand, being a cooperative regional partner who faces domestic claims for more and better public policies for their own population and, on the other hand, having to mitigate any form of threat relating to unfair trade, migration or trafficking perceived by its regional counterparts. Furthermore, as Milani et al (2017, 599) affirm, 'in the case of Brazil, another dilemma should be highlighted: the US presence in the region. Brazil is faced with the dilemma of whether to challenge a hemispheric hegemon that is, at the same time, a global superpower.'

Historically, whilst the military played a ubiquitous domestic role in Brazil during the authoritarian regime between 1964 and 1985, South Africa under apartheid was often accused of creating regional instability by invading neighbouring states suspected of harbouring ANC operatives. However, despite its militant regional policy, South Africa has no legacy of military intervention in domestic politics, whereas Brazil's military participated in transnational operations orchestrated in partnership with Washington against left-wing activists in the region in the 1970s (Arantes 2012; Quadrat 2012). Nonetheless, given the relative asymmetry of power and wealth between Brazil and South Africa and their immediate neighbours, both Brasilia and Pretoria are weary of their perceived hegemonic capacity in their respective regions.

Accordingly, for South Africa, the 'African Agenda' became the fountainhead of its foreign policy, much of the normative impetus behind development cooperation programmes being shaped by Mandela's mantra that his country could not afford to be an island of affluence in a 'sea of poverty'. Under Mbeki (1999–2008), Pretoria became a key driver behind the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the transformation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) into the AU, the creation of the Pan-African Parliament and, in South Africa's immediate neighbourhood, the transformation of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) into the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (Alden and Soko 2005; Alden and Le Pere 2009; Alden and Schoeman 2013). However lofty these goals may be, Pretoria's relationship with the region is often prickly. Illustrative of the graduation dilemma, a senior diplomat privately lamented to one of the authors that the frequency with which some African diplomats complain about South African 'arrogance' would only be met by the frequency of their requests for development support.[5]

Since 2012, some analysts have cited a shift of attitude in foreign policy circles, reflecting a frustration with the seemingly meagre rewards that the country was reaping for its efforts at conflict resolution and stabilization in Africa, South African firms being often overlooked in the allocation of contracts (Vickers 2012; Sidiropoulos 2012; Langeni 2010). As O'Riordan and Stulgaitis (2016, 95) note, 'some South African businesses operating in southern Africa argue that it is better to pretend not to be South African to avoid being associated with South Africa's "bully" status'. The National Development Plan (NDP), underwritten by multiple stakeholders including business, labour and civil society, portrays that sentiment by noting that, 'despite playing a key role in peace settlements on the continent, South Africa has gained little by way of expanded trade and investment opportunities' (National Development Commission 2012, 238).

In short, the graduation dilemma in development cooperation imposes a trio of complications for the country at the regional level. Firstly, it raises political concerns about South Africa being a self-interested hegemon. Second, whilst there is general elite cohesion in support of South Africa playing a leadership role on the continent, business and other stakeholders do not really feature in a development cooperation strategy (Carmody 2012; Van der Merwe 2015). Finally, Pretoria faces competition from China, India and Brazil, which often (unofficially) have more strategically aligned private sector involvement in development cooperation programmes.

Despite difficulties at the domestic level, under the PT governments Brazilian foreign policy reaffirmed South America as a key priority. The region did not represent a threat to the country, even though the 2012 Defence White Paper stressed the need to protect strategic resources in Brazilian Amazonia and to fight against cyber threats, drug-trafficking, weapons-trafficking and maritime piracy. PT governments also stressed the centrality of Mercosur (Southern Common Market) and pushed the expansion both of its institutional architecture and of its membership, as in the case of Venezuela's accession in 2012. For Brazil, Mercosur has strategic significance, because it absorbs more than 60 per cent of the country's foreign direct investment (FDI) in South America and approximately 90 per cent of Brazilian manufactured exports to the region (Hirst and Lima 2015). In order to counteract a vision that some

[5] Interview with first author, 2014.

regional leaders may have of Brazil's role as a regional hegemon, Brasilia supported important initiatives such as the creation of the Structural Convergence Fund (FOCEM), Mercosur's Parliament and the Public Policy Institute for Human Rights. These initiatives, however, did not prevent criticism from both civil society and academia in its neighbours which portrayed Brazilian businesses as neo-imperialist and the country as a leader without followers (Kraychete 2016; Malamud 2011).

In 2008, the creation of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) represented the political dimension of sub-continental integration. UNASUR works as a forum and allows its 12 members—all South American countries—to coordinate shared political stances and to deal with eventual contexts of institutional instability and uncertainty. Moreover, the new organization encompasses diverse areas of public policy cooperation, such as defence, drug control, education, health and infrastructure. The original Brazilian decision to institutionalize UNASUR as a regional governance body addressing conflict resolution and security protection reveals its intention to neutralize any US intervention in the event of serious political instability in the region. UNASUR played an active role in Bolivia's internal crisis (2008), the crisis involving Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela (2008), the failed coup in Ecuador (2010) and Lugo's destitution in Paraguay (2012). In all these events, the Brazilian government prompted South America to collectively frame a common response under the auspices of UNASUR. Under Michel Temer's government, however, aside from the structural difficulty relating to an asymmetric context in South America, Brazil's lack of state capacity to implement policy decisions and to take on all the costs relating to infrastructural integration was aggravated by Brasilia's recent decision (announced in April 2018) to pause its participation in UNASUR for six months. Whether or not UNASUR will survive the current regional turmoil remains an open question.

The global level

For both Brazil and South Africa at least two dilemmas arise at the global level: firstly, the necessity to signal graduation (which involves being a 'player' in IDC) as a status-enhancing symbol in terms of social creativity (Larson and Shevchenko, 2014:39) and, at the same time, providing 'alternative' modes of development assistance untainted by the prescriptive and normative approach based on political conditionality associated with the OECD-DAC.

Both Brazil and South Africa have long cherished leadership roles on their continents and have over the years, used various status indicators to signal these leadership claims. Within regional integration processes, both countries have championed the establishment of trade and financial mechanisms to compensate for the huge asymmetry between Brazil and other Mercosur countries, as well as between South Africa and other SADC/SACU countries. Within the IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) Dialogue Forum development fund, both countries (together with India) contribute, albeit modestly, to the funding of development projects in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

In the particular case of Brazil, with Ambassador Celso Amorim as minister of foreign affairs, Lula da Silva's government sketched a 'grand strategy' based on the idea of a multipolar international order and a development model emphatically geared to national autonomy. Lula and Amorim's strategy focused on regional integration in South America, but also on SSC. The formation of the IBSA Dialogue Forum, the creation of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and since 2010 South Africa) and increased dialogue between foreign policy and defence have explicitly demonstrated such ambition for international prominence.

These were important features of Brazil's international prominence between 2003 and 2010, which together with the pre-salt oil discovery announced in 2007 boosted the country's diplomacy. This, in turn, enabled Brazil to question asymmetric global governance structures and to advocate for political reforms in global institutions. Both in the World Trade Organization's meeting in Cancún in 2003 and in the Turkish–Brazilian mediation proposal for the Iranian nuclear deal in 2010, Brazil's government demonstrated that it wanted to 'act globally' and to be a rule-maker in the international order (Amorim 2017). Brazil not only refused to sign the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas in 2010, but also became China's main trade and investment partner in Latin America, including in the extraction of oil from pre-salt layer resources. When Lula was preparing to step down in December 2010, opinion polls showed that his personal approval rating had reached a dizzying high of approximately 87 per cent (Grudgings, 2010).

Another dimension of the graduation dilemma is the extent to which regional powers become subject to norms of global governance that may conflict with expectations at the regional or domestic level. For example, in 1995, the UN High Level Committee for South–South Cooperation elevated Brazil to the status of a 'pivotal country', along with 21 other developing countries, despite the Brazilian government insisting on the horizontality of links among developing nations. As a result, there was an increase in demands for technical cooperation with Brazil, entailing costs for Brazil at the domestic level.

Many if not most of these strategies were also mirrored across the Atlantic, where similar grand strategies, like Thabo Mbeki's vision of an African Renaissance, shared much with Lula's idea of self-esteem. For South Africa, this search for status also included a claim to a permanent seat on a reformed UN Security Council, membership in the G20, welcoming the Pan-African Parliament and hosting major international sports events like the 2010 World Cup and numerous UN conferences (AIDS 2000; Racism, Xenophobia 2001; Sustainable Development 2002). Similarly, Pretoria also understood that a fully fledged development cooperation agency was a 'must have' for a leading power from the developing world (Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) 2011, 3). Accordingly, in 2009, the Foreign Ministry was renamed the Department of International Relations *and Cooperation* (DIRCO). The invitation to become a member of BRICS signalled considerable recognition of South Africa's status not least given that its membership, unlike the other BRIC countries, does not flow from its economic or demographic significance. As a consequence, South Africa justifies its inclusion on the basis of its capacity to 'represent Africa', thereby making its leadership at the global level dependent on its regional followership and making South Africa's graduation dilemma much more complex than Brazil's. This leaves Pretoria vulnerable to accusations of masking its own interests as African interests. At the same time, portraying national interests as collectively regional also bedevils the country's capacity to openly embrace its own economic interests on its development cooperation programmes (van der

Westhuizen 2017), which could eventually lead to knock-on effects at the domestic level.

At the same time, both Brazil and South Africa contend that, as they are non-DAC members, their development cooperation programmes are distinct from the 'prescriptive' means employed by the West. They only provide technical assistance in response to specific requests and 'needs' of recipient states.[6] The notion of 'partnership' therefore serves an important discursive function as a means to untie some of the dilemmas noted above. The concept highlights the extent to which South Africa's engagement with recipient countries stems from a position of equality, free from any 'neo-colonial' perceptions. That legitimation strategy draws upon the country's proximity to its partners, its specialized expertise and familiarity with its continent and its ability to contribute to institutional and human resource development (Besharati 2013b, 27). Second, the notion of partnership underscores the financial and technical limitations of South Africa's ability to contribute to development cooperation. South Africa will mainly draw on its credibility and networks as a means to leverage other sources of assistance.[7]

Like Pretoria, Brasilia does not conceive its development cooperation strategy within the framework of a donor–beneficiary relationship. 'Partnership', 'horizontal development' and a 'diplomacy of solidarity' are the keywords in Brazil's official rhetoric (Milani et al 2017). In short, the ideas of 'partnership' and development cooperation, rather than that of being a 'donor', for both countries highlight the idea of *burden-sharing*, thus helping to sell such programmes to their own domestic audiences as self-interest and to beneficiary countries as a means of downplaying the 'neo-colonial' agenda related to foreign aid at the regional level. In practice, however, the dilemma is that, whilst South Africa wants to align its developmental diplomacy with the mutual interests and principles of SSC, 'the very nature of being a development actor tends to create asymmetrical power relations' (Naidu 2017, 137–169). The commitment not to ascribe to traditional OECD-DAC principles becomes particularly daunting in the case of trilateral development cooperation where South Africa provides funds or technical assistance to a third country, usually with a Northern partner, which will ascribe to OECD-DAC principles.

Likewise, Brazilian SSC under Lula and Dilma also revealed public–private tensions, and brought about contradictions for Brazil's SSC discourse based on solidarity and practices rooted in strategic interest. Countries where technical cooperation projects are more numerous may also be those where Brazilian transnational companies and businesses are present. Brazilian FDI in mining, infrastructure and civil engineering projects such as roads, airports, harbours, metros, energy, oil prospecting and agribusiness, among other economic sectors, has played a key development role in African and Latin American countries. FDI is different from technical cooperation, but *sur le terrain* existing borders between practices and agents involved in one and another are often blurred, just like in the case of North–South cooperation. Brazilian businesses' strategies in Africa and Latin America may raise political and ethical questions as to how different Brazil's pro-corporate economic growth is from other economic models promoted by Western countries and rising powers. If Brazilian SSC strategies are to be a

[6] DIRCO official, interview with first author, 2014.
[7] Ibid.

developmental alternative, empirical research needs to reveal how distinctive they really are from traditional economic practices (Gu et al 2016).

Analysis: comparing the impact of the 'intermestic' dimension of the graduation dilemma

Through their foreign policy agendas as providers of technical, economic, humanitarian and educational cooperation, South Africa and Brazil seek not only recognition but also a greater rule-making role. Even if they both materially differentiate themselves from neighbours and other developing countries, Brazil's and South Africa's respective engagement with IDC features four issues that are of some significance, namely (i) policy transfer, (ii) economic interests, (iii) institutionalization and (iv) domestic politics and support coalitions.

First, Brazil's and South Africa's respective roles in IDC have recently been motivated by a search for wider recognition of their own social policies and development trajectory as potentially useful to other developing countries. Policy transfer is therefore one of the means much employed by Brazil and South Africa in their technical cooperation programmes. By means of multilateral (for instance, through the IBSA Fund) and bilateral development cooperation, Brazil and South Africa have looked for prominent international relations with Latin American (Brazil), African (South Africa and Brazil) and Portuguese-speaking countries (Brazil).

However, under the Lula and to a lesser extent the Dilma governments, Brasília has been more successful than Pretoria in tying its domestic agenda on poverty reduction to a similar international narrative, as in Lula's Zero Hunger campaign and Dilma's Brazil without Misery campaign at the UN. Through these campaigns, Brazil has acquired 'soft power' due to international acclaim for the Bolsa Família and Food Purchase programmes. Although South Africa's redistributive programmes are similar to the Brazilian ones in scope and financial volume, Pretoria has not been able to give an international face to them, despite its general support for redistributive measures in global governance.

Besides Brazil's more institutionalized history of strategic use of development cooperation programmes, political considerations in South Africa also play a role in this mismatch. For example, unlike in Brazil, the complexity of immigration as a public policy issue and frequent xenophobic attacks may well prevent South African policy-makers from drawing from South Africa's redistributive social grants as a source of soft power. Moreover, in contrast to Brazil's success in reducing its level of income inequality, South Africa (along with Haiti and Namibia) remains one of the world's most unequal societies (Barr 2017). Despite the policy transfer of Brazilian social policies through development cooperation programmes having enhanced Brazil's soft power, Brazilian NGOs and social movements (like Fase, Connectas and others) have also been much more critical and vocal than their South African counterparts about the sustainability and desirability of some of these initiatives. Some actors even contend that development cooperation programmes enable a 'new imperialism' on the part of Brasilia.[8]

[8] Interview with first author, August 2017.

Second, South African and Brazilian debates about the role and significance of economic interests also differ. While the public in both countries agree that development cooperation, like foreign policy, generally should advance national interest and foster domestic development, South African development cooperation experts are the ones who lament the absence of a clear strategy for articulating development programmes with South African business (O'Riordan and Stulgaitis 2016). In contrast, Brazilian IDC practices may reveal tensions between the public interest and corporate goals. Public–private contradictions, political leaders' liaisons with business and the presence of money in politics may bring about policy (and political failures) that have not been anticipated in Brazil's IDC trajectory, thus potentially jeopardizing Brazil's SSC discourse and practice (Funada 2013; Garcia et al 2013).

Third, Brasilia's and Pretoria's interest in development cooperation seems consistent with left-wing parties' generally development-orientated policies, especially amongst social democratic parties with an emphasis on welfare state institutions at home (Lancaster 2007; Thérien and Noël, 2000). However, we propose that apartheid South Africa's international isolation complicated the development of Pretoria's role in development cooperation. As a result, South Africa lost out on many opportunities for institutional learning, which allowed Brazil, unencumbered by similar constraints, to gain the necessary track from which to develop a more coherent and institutionalized development cooperation programme.

Fourth, both countries emphasize horizontal cooperation and inter-state cooperation; but, differently from traditional donors, they only exceptionally channel their cooperation through civil society organizations. The principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs, when applied to IDC, provokes public debate in Brazil and South Africa around human rights and democracy promotion. Difficulties may also arise out of inefficient implementation and promises that are not followed by concrete actions. The institutional architecture for cooperation requires a professional bureaucracy at the domestic level. Improvising is a risk. That implies that the Brazilian and South African governments must confront issues relating to the lack of state capacity, absence of a proper regulatory framework, insufficient funding, little evaluation of the results, constant budget cuts and operational procedures.

Finally, in terms of domestic politics and government-supporting coalitions, a number of similarities and differences also appear. For both countries, it is a challenge to sell international development programmes to domestic constituencies given their very stark levels of inequality and poverty. However, in their very different political systems, the construction of *legislative* support coalitions are simpler in the South African case, considering its de facto one-party dominance since 1994. Whilst foreign policy does not appear on the legislative agenda frequently in either country, the PT's and the ANC's ideological support for states like Zimbabwe or Cuba has risked politicizing development cooperation initiatives due to accusations of turning a blind eye to human rights infringements in order to support 'solidarity'.

Both countries need to confront the politically sensitive matter of building domestic coalitions of support for their development cooperation agenda, not only within government, but also among a broader range of social actors, including civil society organizations, social movements, the media, business groups, and unions and professional associations. Explaining to their respective domestic audiences and citizenry why a developing nation, with deep-seated levels of inequality, democratic deficits and considerable social policy needs, should invest in foreign policy and development cooperation may imply political costs, risks and uncertainties.[9] However, based on Hill's (2003) conception of foreign policy, we believe that building transparency programmes and justifying policy decisions are key components of legitimacy and responsibility in foreign policy and IDC. After all, escaping the graduation dilemma requires domestic support.

Conclusion

The field of development cooperation provides an interesting basis to illuminate the complexities that emerge from the entanglement of the domestic and international dimensions—the intermestic—facing emerging and regional powers. Drawing upon the concept of graduation dilemma, we have argued that, within the BRICS group, Brazil and South Africa, as second-tier *and* non-nuclear powers, seek to use development cooperation as a foreign policy instrument in their international graduation strategy. Nevertheless, this strategy does not come without a variety of complications.

To illustrate these difficulties, we briefly contextualized the evolution of Brazil's and South Africa's development cooperation programmes, highlighting the growing significance that Brasilia and Pretoria attached to their roles as emerging players in development cooperation, at least until 2014. At the *domestic level*, such a role was consistent with the ruling parties—the ANC's and PT's—political programmes, their emphasis on national development and their rollout of anti-poverty social assistance programmes at home. However, opposition parties and other social groups argued that a development cooperation policy that did not apply the same OECD criteria of political conditionality undermined Brazil's and South Africa's human rights foreign policy. Moreover, these groups also questioned whether development cooperation programmes created spillover economic benefits back home.

Graduation creates a dilemma also at the regional level for both countries, as, although their neighbours recognize potential benefits stemming from their roles in Southern Africa and South America, they identify risks of domination and coercive hegemonic practices as well. As a result, both countries have invested a great deal in the creation of regional institutions (Mercosur's structural funds, SADC, UNASUR, AU's NEPAD) also as financial pay-off mechanisms.

The global level introduces yet another level of complexity into the graduation dilemma. On the one hand, both countries see development cooperation as a way of signalling status as regional powers from the geopolitical South.

[9] A neglected area in the field of foreign policy analysis are the implications for policy of differing conceptual approaches to risk and uncertainty. That is even more true in the field of IDC and policy transfer. If an issue (in health cooperation, transfer of educational practices, international capacity-building of military officials, etc) is not structured appropriately or if it does not consider the different dimensions of the problem, policy (and political) failures are likely to result. One possible avenue for future research may be the dialogue between approaches to risk and IDC as a foreign policy agenda, building upon the work of Kowert and Hermann (1997), Lamborn (1985) and Vertzberger (1995).

On the other hand, they need to differentiate themselves from those 'already graduated', devising development programmes that are not as politically prescriptive as those pursued by the OECD's DAC members. At least rhetorically, ideas about 'partnership' and 'horizontal development' are frequently bandied about to highlight notions of burden-sharing, to downplay, at the same time, the perception that development cooperation can also be a win–win agenda and to sell such programmes to domestic audiences as part and parcel of the national interest.

By analysing development cooperation as a foreign policy issue area, we have sought to highlight the complexities that regional and emerging powers must deal with when they implement a foreign policy strategy based on international prominence and a claim to a rule-making role in global governance within the framework of peaceful international power transition models. Other international relations and foreign policy agendas could also be further analysed comparatively to illustrate such complexities, such as human rights, internationalization of businesses, climate change negotiations and peacekeeping operations.

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