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*Actors and dynamics of a policy transfer  
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Countries*

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# ACTORS AND DYNAMICS OF A POLICY TRANSFER NETWORK: BRAZIL AS A DEVELOPER AND THE COOPERATION ON FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SECURITY IN THE COMMUNITY OF PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Based on the discussions of Role Theory and policy transfer, this paper analyzes how the transfer of food and nutritional security policies to the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries relates to Brazil's performance as a "developer". We demonstrate how a transnational policy transfer network congregating several cooperation modalities was constructed as a status-seeking strategy grounded on projecting domestic policies. Therefore, the policy transfer case study, was carried out, through interviews and document analysis, in order to observing the cooperative dynamic by mapping the effects that the contacts established between several actors had in the long term. The temporal scope of the analysis begins with the arrival of Lula da Silva to the Presidency in 2003, and extends until the II Extraordinary Meeting of the CPLP Council of Food and Nutritional Security, in June 2017. For conducting an operational analysis, social participation and inter-sectorial work were selected as representatives of the conceptual framework related to the Human Right to Adequate Food, since they are two central ideas for the policies that are the object of experience-sharing in South-South cooperation on food and nutritional security.

**Keywords:** Brazil, CPLP, food and nutritional security international cooperation.

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## I. Introduction

In 2014, the Malnutrition Prevalence Indicator in Brazil was reduced to less than 5%. This achievement signaled the country's exit from the Hunger Map of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Between 1990 and 2012, Brazil

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reduced the percentage of population living in extreme poverty from 25.5% to 3.5%, the leading cause of hunger in the country (FAO, 2014). With such an outcome, despite the innumerable challenges yet to overcome, the Brazilian experience has come to be referenced worldwide as a successful case, having triggered experience sharing in various cooperative arrangements. Brazilian South-South cooperation in this area is mainly technical and aims to build and strengthen institutional public policies, with emphasis being placed on those that align school feeding, institutional markets, family farming support and civil society participation in policy building and implementation.

This article intends to focus on how the transfer of Food and Nutritional Security (FNS) policies to the Member States of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP in Portuguese) relates to Brazil's performance in promoting development, as well as on how a policy transfer network, involving several cooperation modalities and actors has been articulated within the Community.

From an analytical perspective, this article intends also to explore how the focus on fighting hunger in the Brazilian foreign policy fits also a status-seeking strategy in the international political arena. Thus, from a Role Theory perspective, international cooperation is here approached as a foreign policy instrument.

The second level of analysis focuses on policy transfer and how different cooperation actors took part in this process. Therefore, process-tracing based on Dolowitz and Marsh's (2000) policy transfer framework, oriented the cooperative dynamic analysis by mapping the effects that the contacts established between several cooperation actors had in the long term. The temporal scope of the analysis begins with the arrival of Lula da Silva to the Presidency in 2003 and extends up to the end of Temer's mandate, in 2018. In the analysis, social participation and inter-sectorial work were selected as representatives of the conceptual framework developed in Brazil in regard to the Human Right to Adequate Food (HRAF), because both concepts are central ideas of the policies that are the object of 'experience-sharing' in cooperation.<sup>4</sup>

This article presents the main results of previous research study conducted by the authors. The study examined the construction of National Food and Nutrition Security Strategies, School Feeding Programs and National Food and Nutritional Security Councils in

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<sup>4</sup> These concepts are fundamental to the National Food and Nutrition Security System established by Law No. 11.346/2006. Intersectionality can be considered an strategy to respond to public policy sectorization and fragmentation, it presupposes political decision, articulation between sectors and complementarity of actions, seeking a look at the totality of manifestations of the social issue and the citizens who demand public assistance (Wanderley; Martinelli; da Paz, 2020).

the CPLP countries, through documental analysis and interviews with diverse policy stakeholders involved in cooperation initiatives: diplomats, consultants, professors, researchers who worked on the ground, public servants enrolled in school feeding and family farming policies<sup>5</sup>, as well as civil society representatives.

With regard to document analysis, research was carried out in the archives of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) and documents related to the projects analyzed were collected with the help of agents from each CPLP country. In addition, were also analyzed legislations, national strategies related to the topic, as well as reports from United Nations agencies. The documental analysis served as the basis for the interview scripts. Based on the material collected, it was possible to develop the process-tracing of Brazilian cooperation resented in the case study.

Choosing a transversal analysis of the countries enabled the observation of processes that were intertwined over time in several cooperation arrangements, such as bilateral, triangular, multilateral and network cooperation. Besides demonstrating the formation of a transnational policy transfer network, in which plural cooperation actors interact and share resources, it was possible to observe characteristics, achievements, and limits of Brazilian cooperation, as well as how the Brazilian agenda influenced traditional donors and international organizations, indicating a growing centrality of triangular cooperation.<sup>6</sup>

## **II. The Zero Hunger Program in Brazil: from domestic action to global activism**

Since the emergence of the term ‘food security’ in international debates in the 1970s, as a concept related to ensuring stable production to meet the growing demand, until its articulation with the concept of HRAF mentioned in the 1966 International Covenant on

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<sup>5</sup> With regard to Brazilian public agents, officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE), the former Ministry of Social Development (MDS), the former Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) and the National Education Development Fund (FNDE) were interviewed, as well as CONSEA members at the time that the Council was working.

<sup>6</sup> Although without a consolidated definition, the literature commonly refers to triangular cooperation (TC) as a triparty relation between traditional donor, emerging donor and a beneficiary, who often share economic and geographic characteristics, contexts and cultural, historical and linguistic ties (Cabral and Weinstock 2010; Chaturvedi 2012; OCDE 2012). According to some authors, the TC came to introduce a new impulse and ambition in the discussions on cooperation (Chaturvedi 2012; OECD 2012; SEGIB 2008). One main characteristic of the TC approach is the harmonization of the strengths and comparative advantages of the actors, through the structuring of strategies that correspond to the needs and aspirations of the beneficiary, and which are also appropriate to the characteristics of the other parties involved (Cabral and Weinstock 2010; Sato et al. 2011; Chaturvedi 2012; Pantoja and Elsner 2009; Correa 2009). In this regard, the TC is closer to the functioning of a more balanced relationship in the context of South-South interchangeable donors and beneficiaries, than to the traditional functioning of North-South cooperation where roles are much more fixed and non-mutable.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, there was a necessary slowdown of the ideological divisions between civil and political rights, and social, economic and cultural rights possible only with as the Cold War drew to a close (Mechlem, 2004).

From the 1990s onwards, these concepts gradually developed in a more articulated way, aggregating reflections on the causes of hunger, which were not restricted to the productive deficit, but also encompass access to income, nutritional quality and cultural issues related to consumption and production. Also included in the debates in the 1990s was the food sovereignty concept developed by Via Campesina, which concerns the people's right to define their sustainable production, commercialization, consumption policies and strategies, according to the various cultural characteristics,

While discussions regarding the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) took place in the United Nations (UN), the social movement Citizenship Action against Hunger, Misery and for Life was spreading in Brazil, aiming to bring together society's efforts for ending hunger and misery. From then on, the construction of a national policy with social participation had high and low points.

In 1993, the government created the National Council for Food and Nutritional Security (CONSEA in Portuguese), a Presidency advisory body and space for articulation between state and civil society. This Council was closed in 1995 and reinstated in 2003, having played a crucial role for the consolidation of the National Policy on Food and Nutritional Security. In 2019, CONSEA was closed again in President Bolsonaro's first acts, and reinstated months later beside the Ministry of Citizenship, but still with no signs of a return to regular work. The closing moments of the Council, however, did not paralyze civil society mobilizations. In 1998, the Brazilian Forum on Food and Nutrition Sovereignty and Security (FBSSAN in Portuguese) was created, which was composed of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), social movements and academic institutions, among others. Today, the same Forum that played a fundamental role in the work of COMSEA is organizing the Popular Conference on Food and Nutritional Security, given the current Council paralysis.

The Zero Hunger Program created by President Lula represents the peak in the trajectory of a historical movement in the fight against hunger that gained strength with the re-democratization of the country. Its developments gave rise to the National Policy on Food and Nutritional Security, which brings together the concepts of HRAF, FNS and food sovereignty, seeking to overcome the ideological divergences that each one of these concepts presents. The Brazilian definition of food security introduces the addition of the adjective

"nutritional" to the most commonly used expression "food security and nutrition", emphasizing the relationship between socioeconomic and nutritional factors, in order to highlight the inter-sectorial work that this concept encompasses (Leitão & Maluf, 2012).

This policy is implemented through the action of the National Food and Nutritional Security System, whose foundations consist not only in inter-sectorial work, developed in an Inter-ministerial Chamber, but also in social participation, exercised through CONSEA. This model developed at the Federal level was replicated in the States and is currently being implemented in the municipalities. Therefore, even with the closure of CONSEA Nacional in 2019, state and municipal councils continued to operate.

One of the most significant symbols of the inter-ministerial articulation, and of the link between state and civil society is the Food Acquisition Program (PAA in Portuguese), because it involves the public purchasing from family farmers to the National School Feeding Program (PNAE in Portuguese) and other variants of public procurement. This experience of home-grown school feeding based on short production and consumption circuits attracted the attention of the World Food Program (WFP), at a time when this UN agency underwent reduced support from traditional donors due to the world crisis evidenced in 2008 and invested in transition programs that promoted the autonomy of school feeding programs in developing countries. In this context, Brazil has developed several bilateral and triangular projects on school feeding. Moreover, it has received and carried out many study missions with the support of the International Policy Center for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) and the WFP Center of Excellence Against Hunger, UN centers which are supported by Brazil and based in Brasilia to promote knowledge-sharing for combating hunger and poverty.

While promoting internal reforms, Brazil undertook a foreign policy aimed at raising the country's international profile, seeking to situate it as a necessary interlocutor for the construction of a more just and democratic order. This strategy emphasizes the collaboration that Brazil could provide as a global public goods promoter, reconciling the principle of solidarity with the interests of gaining legitimacy, as well as the expansion of activities of national agencies (Schleicher & Platiau, 2017). In the case of the FNS agenda, Brazil advocated in favor of forming a global network to fight hunger (Fraundorfer, 2013), where non-governmental actors would combine efforts with state actors gaining thus formal access to international organizations such as the FAO and CPLP. In this context, the principle of social participation was highlighted as an element to be diffused internationally, among other elements related to policies for family farming advocated by the Brazilian policy network (Milhorance, 2020).

The following topics address Brazil's role as a developer focused on combating hunger in the CPLP. One may observe how different actors have developed an agenda that encompassed various cooperative arrangements for policy promotion. Such a scenario indicates the trends of articulation in the international cooperation system that encompasses South-South and Triangular cooperation, as well as attempts to include civil society in the cooperation arena, bringing empirical elements for observing the formation of networks for the diffusion / transfer of policies as a factor of Brazil's projection as an actor capable to acting as a developer through cooperation.

### **III. Development cooperation as a foreign policy instrument: the case of Brazil as a developer and policy transfer**

The concept of 'role' was explored by International Relations in several ways, composing an eclectic conceptual and theoretical framework. By categorically separating the study of international politics from foreign policy analysis, Wendt (1999) states that the role is an attribute of structure. This perspective contrasts with the concept of role characterized by Holsti (1970), a foreign policy analyst who developed the concept of national role conceptions based on the images and beliefs that state leaders have about the state identity, which serves as a parameter for foreign policy formulation. Role Theory, in its multiple aspects, has been presented as an alternative to connect levels of analysis in the study of foreign policy and its relationship with International Relations theories, especially in discussions focused on agency and structure interactions (Barnett, 1993; Thies & Breuning, 2012).

Regarding the theoretical link between role and identity, one of the possible approaches is to consider that identity gives the actor a direction to interpret his situation and the expectations of appropriate behavior that arise from that situation. In this respect, identity would be a set of meanings that characterize an actor in a role, the relationship between these two elements being dynamic and co-constitutive, based on the reciprocity between agency and structure (Nabers, 2011).

This theory envisages a rich descriptive conceptual framework that can be used at various levels of analysis. The concept of role expectations corresponds both to domestic requirements about what role is appropriate and what it implies, as well as to the implicit and explicit expectations of others. Very close to this concept is the concept of role demand, which corresponds to the call for a given action (role enactment) in a specific situation

(Sarbin & Allen, 1998). The term role enactment has been used to designate an actor's behavior when playing a role or how well he develops it, such as the number of roles played, and the time and effort spent in performing a given role (Sarbin & Allen, 1998; Harnisch, 2011).

Some constraints that specific controversial circumstances may present can put an actor in a role conflict situation (Barnett, 1993). Furthermore, the absence of discussions in the domestic interaction in decision-making can neglect cases in which there is no consensus between elites and masses, and even among elites, about the conception and manifestation of a given role. Therefore, it is relevant to consider the consensus, or lack of it, for the role itself and the characteristics of its implementation, as these elements reveal the nature and degree of contestation of the role between different social segments or bureaucratic agencies, for example (Cantir & Karboo 2012).

With respect to positions within a system, the concept of status is inextricably linked to roles and international identity. Identity reinforces certain national role conceptions, which involve the perceptions about the country's potentialities, the position it occupies and which it may aim to occupy in the international system. Thus, the perception of potentialities and the observation of the systemic framework make the state deliver a particular official discourse and act according to the roles it intends to perform, to sustain or reach a specific position. In this framework, identity, status and roles are closely linked into co-constitutive relations.

Conceptions of national roles and the status that has been historically projected for Brazil are marked by the speeches of elites about the ambition to make the country a relevant actor in regional and global politics. These aspirations are based on the idea of the potential power that Brazil has to develop due to its vast territory, its well-defined borders, the linguistic unity and cultural aspects, and also to the possession of abundant natural resources and considerable economic potential. Therefore, the elites hold expectations concerning the recognition of the country's importance in the international system, especially by the established powers (Souza, 2009). Lima (2005, 3) frames Brazil as an intermediate country marked by two international identities: a system affecting state - a state with limited power, but with an assertive international profile (Keohane 1969), and the identity of a large emerging market (US trade representative).

Among the possible strategies of developing countries directed at acquiring status, Welch Larson and Shevchenko (2010) point out the strategy of social creativity, whose main characteristic is the attempt to reframe negative attributes as positive, or to emphasize domains in which they are positively differentiated from the group with the highest status,



thus highlighting its unique contribution to the international system. South-South cooperation to combat poverty emphasizes the quality of a developing country as essential to dealing with similar situations. In this context, the fight against hunger appears in the Brazilian diplomacy discourse as central to international security, with the reduction of poverty being identified as a central element for world stability. Hence, the motivations for Brazilian action in African, for example, are related to the achievement of recognition (Stolte, 2015).

Thus, through its actions in the international development cooperation system, Brazil used elements of its internal policy as an asset to offer in triangular partnerships with international organizations, such as FAO and WFP. Within this scope, we emphasize the external impulse of civil society and the valuation of that characteristic as a democratization aspect and as part of an agenda for the inclusion of historically marginalized actors, such as peasants.

The role of developer indicates a special duty or obligation to assist less developed countries, with certain advantages or abilities being referenced for the execution of assistance (Holsti 1970). In this context, the discourse of Brazil's historical debt to Africa, emphasized in Lula's governments, point to the idea of special obligation, while the language, culture and the developing country condition are the distinctive advantages and skills that have attracted the attention of various partners interested in bilateral, triangular and multilateral network cooperation.

Since the 1960s, Brazil has provided technical cooperation to developing countries, however, it was from the 1980s onwards that this activity gained greater breadth. The country participated in the debates about technical cooperation for development at the UN during the 1970s. Such an ideology, nonetheless, did not reject North-South cooperation. Even today, Brazil is a cooperation beneficiary, which makes Brazil couples its role as developer to the idea of retribution to the received assistance<sup>7</sup>.

The non-alignment to the standards of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the country's involvement in the various discussions on South-South cooperation also indicate Brazil's role as a reformer of the traditional cooperation system. However, despite the discursive focus on solidarity, several authors point to the pursuit of broader foreign policy objectives which involve the interest of specific sectors that pursue

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<sup>7</sup> "Histórico da Cooperação Técnica Brasileira". Agência Brasileira de Cooperação. <http://www.abc.gov.br/CooperacaoTecnica/Historico>. Accessed 29 Jan. 2020.

political, economic, commercial, or institutional objectives (Inove & Vaz, 2012; Schleicher & Platiau, 2017).

Brazilian cooperation is fragmented, with practices influenced by different Ministries and other actors involved in cooperation. Just as Brazilian institutions benefited from North-South cooperation, NGOs and social movements received support from international agencies in the post-democratization period to influence social policies. Thus, civil society entities have claimed space on the international cooperation agenda, even proposing the creation of a Council to address this issue. In this scenario, the FNS cooperation agenda favors the inclusion of social participation due to the need of inter-sectorial work, due to the fact that it allows uniting different sectors of society with experience in international cooperation. The reasons for this are the fact that the government was open to civil society participation, and also the existence of narratives that produce information for the articulation of alternatives that are proposed by civil society (Leite, Suyama & Waisbich, 2013; Leite, 2014).

Social participation is part of the discursive framework of what is to become the democratic practice, and is therefore adopted as a legitimizing principle of important actors of international cooperation, such as the World Bank and the European Union (EU). The latter influenced the development of Brazilian policies in the post-democratization period through cooperation projects. Nonetheless, it is essential to analyze social participation in international cooperation beyond discourse, observing, for instance, whether participatory practices are superficial, and generate a false idea of community homogeneity, or whether there is continuity of participation throughout the process, as short participatory actions do not imprint the actor's consciousness transformation. Therefore, there are important elements about social participation in cooperation which should be considered, namely: who determines the debate content, what is the objective of the participatory action, what are the participation rules, what is the participants' profile, and if participation was achieved or instituted from above (Milani 2008).

In Brazilian cooperation, when it comes to contesting the official discourse, civil society representatives emphasize that cooperation reflects the social conflicts of interest. In the case of FNS, different social segments and bureaucratic agencies defend different development models related to agriculture, food security and agribusiness, due to the very complex nature of the interests and systems involved in this area. In addition to the divergent views on development of cooperation agents, we can observe that there are constraints caused by social, political and economic differences, found in countries that try to replicate Brazilian experiences (Leite et al., 2014; Abdenur & Marcondes, 2016).

Research in this area presents methodological difficulties related to the real dimension of this influence, a fact that is partly due to the lack of systematic evaluation of the effects of South-South cooperation, and to the difficulty of accessing reliable data and methodologies to assess political and institutional influence produced by cooperation. Nevertheless, the cooperative dynamics analysis reveals the growing centrality of triangular cooperation and the interconnection of various actors in what can be called a policy transfer network committed to spreading the food security agenda.

Policy transfer and diffusion studies are, in no small extent, complementary. Diffusion commonly refers to a more general term in which structures or factors related to modernization or innovation influence policy adoption (Newmark 2002). One of the most referenced policy transfer definition is the one provided by Dolowitz and Marsh (2000. 5), which states: “policy transfer, emulation and lesson drawing refer to the process by means of which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in a political environment (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political environment”. Diffusion and transference are not dissociated. However, literature on policy transference emphasizes the process, works with small case studies and adopts qualitative methods, such as process tracing. In contrast, diffusion studies are generally quantitative based on a large sample of cases to determine patterns of behavior.

Despite the differences, both literatures highlight four main mechanisms: learning, competition, coercion and mimetics. In the literature relating to transference, the study of the learning process predominates. Learning implies the rational decision of government officials to emulate foreign practices and institutions as the most efficient way to solve particular problems. This process can lead to a partial or total transfer and can happen bilaterally or through transnational networks or epistemic communities. In addition to learning, the mechanism of mimetics, also called emulation or socialization, indicates the copying of foreign models in terms of symbolic and normative factors without significant concerns about the functionality of the model in another space, in order to follow standards related to modernity (Rose, 1991; Marsh & Sharman 2009).

Dolowitz and Marsh have indicated questions about the transfer process as a guide for case studies: Why are actors involved in policy transfer? Who are the key actors involved in this process? What is transferred? Where are the lessons learned from? What are the different degrees of transfer? What facilitates or restricts the process? In our regional case study formed by CPLP countries, demand-driven South-South cooperation is known to be a

voluntary form of transfer. In the analyzed scenario, Brazilian experiences gained prominence and started to be considered as good practices, a fact that explains the demand and the essential role of triangular cooperation with international organizations. The question about what is transferred was answered when the guiding principles of FNS policies, which were the object of that study, were exposed. In line with the potential of descriptive inference, identifying the interaction between cooperation partners reveals characteristics of international cooperation system dynamics.

Generally, actors involved in policy transfer are elected officials, political parties, bureaucrats / civil servants, pressure groups, policymakers and experts, transnational corporations, think tanks, supra-national organizations, governmental and non-governmental institutions, and consultants. In this scenario, consultants stand out, as policy-makers usually rely on their expertise to develop programs, policies and institutional structures. Likewise, international organizations, notably the UN, are increasingly involved in the spread of ideas and programs. The influence of international organizations can be direct, through funding, or indirect, through conferences and reports. Likewise, NGOs and transnational networks also influence the agenda-setting and other processes in the policy cycle (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000).

Lesson drawing involves observing plans and programs to analyze what has been done to solve problems and what can be used in the domestic field. This process does not always imply adopting the policy because either some elements, or a program altogether, may not contemplate the reality of another social, political and institutional context, or there are no resources available for implementation. The first step of lesson drawing is to seek information about programs applied by public agencies which have addressed similar problems to grasp general ideas that can be adapted. Thus, emulation corresponds not to a perfect copy of a policy, but to the recognition that a model offers elements for policy design with the necessary adaptations (Rose, 1991).

Policy diffusion and transfer involve different actors with a national, transnational and global scope of work. Such a range of levels and actors also allows for insights about agency and structure relations. In this sense, Evans and Davies (1999) raise the possibility of studying policy transfer from a multilevel and multidisciplinary approach based on the argument that the literature on policy transfer, policy network and epistemic communities can be brought together in what they call a policy transfer network. These networks would be *ah doc* arrangements of diverse actors who share specific values and act with the specific objective of changing policies. Studying these networks helps to clarify the complex interaction between

states and an international agenda also built by non-state, transnational and international actors (Evans and Davies 1999). In this context, it is crucial to explore network formation and functioning, as well as to consider that actors experience the interdependence of resources and responsibilities.

#### **IV. Brief methodological considerations**

The following analysis aims at capturing the dynamics involved in policy transfer concerning FNS in CPLP, which reveals Brazil's performance as a developer in the Community, and the formation of varied cooperation arrangements that demonstrate the versatility of the relations that integrate the international cooperation system, when triangular cooperation gains more significant dimension, among other reasons, due to investment reduction in cooperation since the 2008 crisis. The outcome of the regional case study presented below not only aims to elucidate the peculiarities of Brazilian cooperation at a time when the country was seeking to strengthen the South-South relations, but also to observe the performance of a policy transfer network, its successes and challenges for building FNS policies in Portuguese-speaking countries.

Before proceeding, there are a few methodological notes that must be presented to better frame the analysis ahead. As already stated, the documental analysis was accompanied by 58 interviews conducted between September 2015 and July 2017. These were carried out next to diverse policy stakeholders involved in cooperation initiatives, such as diplomats, consultants, professors, field researchers, public servants enrolled in school feeding and family farming policies in Brazil and in its partner countries<sup>8</sup>, as well as civil society representatives<sup>9</sup>.

Semi-structured interviews were the chosen technique as these allow for the use of a pre-established script that is though flexible enough to allow for the introduction of prompts which when properly registered can bring extra insights to the interview's analysis. The scripts used in each interview were prepared from a previous document analysis regarding the activity actors were involved in, so that they could clarify issues and gaps identified in

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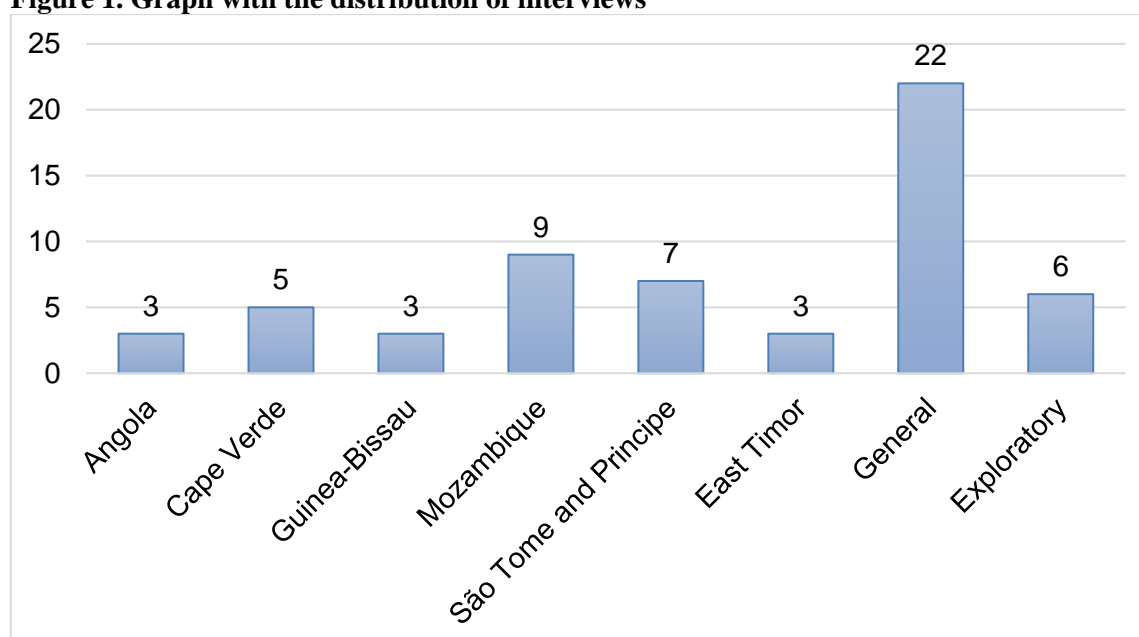
<sup>8</sup> With regard to Brazilian public agents, officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the former Ministry of Social Development, the former Ministry of Agrarian Development and the National Education Development Fund were interviewed, as well as CONSEA members at the time that the Council was working.

<sup>9</sup> During the research, interviews were conducted remotely, via Skype and Whatsapp (30), and in person in Brasília (18), Lisbon (9) and Porto (1).

documents such as government declarations and project and activity reports, for example. In some cases, respondents provided and indicated documents for analysis after the interviews.

Among the interviewees were civil society actors linked to REDSAN-CPLP, consultants and former consultants, mostly Brazilian, who have already had work experiences at FNDE, MDS, MRE, CONSEA or FAO, as well as some consultants from local nationality and people linked to cooperation in the CPLP. In addition, representatives of the CONSAN-CPLP Civil Society Participation Mechanism and some technicians and civil servants from partner countries were interviewed. Some informants asked not to be identified. Therefore, the distribution of interviews shown in the graph below does not identify any differentiation by institution or category of actors. Interviews were also carried out with government agents in the countries, except for Angola. The interviews placed in the “General” category dealt specifically with Brazilian cooperation, cooperation in SAN in general or with a focus on CPLP and/or with specific mention of a particular country or several countries.

**Figure 1. Graph with the distribution of interviews**



**Source:** elaborated by the authors

The choice of cross-sectional treatment of the group of countries provided an analysis rarely conducted on the relationships generated in the institutional space of the CPLP. Thus, several processes that intertwined over time could be observed. Each country component of the regional case study had different characteristics considering the cooperation influence. As it was possible to observe throughout the research, each country had a particular cooperative trajectory with its own dynamics and objective. Thus, this qualitative research based on the

analysis of diplomatic discourse up to the application, or difficulty in applying, of the propagated practices and concepts, considering the view of the actors involved in cooperation, gives the work the character of a descriptive inference regarding the analysis of a dynamic process of interactions related to Brazil's attempt of role playing.

## **V. Actors and dynamics of a food and nutritional security policy transfer network at CPLP**

With the international dissemination of the Zero Hunger Program, a broad interest of Latin American and African countries in Brazilian policies emerged, which gave rise to several forms of cooperation: bilateral, triangular, multilateral and *ad doc*. Among the multilateral initiatives, we find the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries Food and Nutritional Security Strategy (ESAN-CPLP in Portuguese). The approval of the strategy in 2011 represents the culmination of a diversified cooperative path that involved active Brazilian cooperation with the support of FAO and WFP, and also backed by NGOs' initiatives for supporting social participation, among other partnerships (Sarmiento & Pinto, 2015).

ESAN-CPLP's goal consists in contributing to hunger and poverty eradication in the Community, through strengthening coordination between member states and improving policy governance. By having the HRAF as its normative basis, the Strategy has as a main space for dialogue, the CPLP Food and Nutritional Security Council (CONSAN-CPLP), modeled after the FAO Committee on World Security (CFS9) which, in turn, in its 2008 reform, received the influence of CONSEA's experience of social participation. In addition to improving governance, ESAN-CPLP aims to promote access to and use of food to improve the livelihoods of the most vulnerable groups, as well as to increase the internal availability of food based on the small producers (CPLP, 2015). The result of the case study developed in this work based on the analysis of documents of cooperation projects, legislation and strategic documents on FNS, as well as interviews with actors who work in cooperation projects, in the creation of civil society national and regional networks and of the regional and national Food and Nutrition Security Councils is presented in the following considerations.

As a result of a cumulative experience-sharing process, family farming and school feeding, namely the institutional purchasing agenda, are enshrined as central issues to the Community. All Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP in Portuguese) and East Timor benefited from Brazilian cooperation in school feeding, some with formally structured

and well-developed bilateral and triangular cooperation projects, such as Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe, some others with more discontinuous projects, like Cape Verde and Timor-Leste and lastly, others such as Angola and Guinea Bissau, which had a more fluid and punctual experience sharing despite the efforts to structure formal projects.

Similarly, all these countries were influenced, both before and after the launch of ESAN-CPLP, by contact with the Brazilian experience in developing national FNS strategies. All these countries received support from the WFP for school feeding in the post-independence period and developed Strategic Paper for Poverty Reduction<sup>10</sup> in the context of the MDG movement. Subsequently, the PALOP required FAO's support to develop National FNS Strategies, a process in which members of CONSEA and FBSSAN participated (Cape Verde, 2012, 2008, 2004; Guinea Bissau, 2011, 2005; Mozambique, 2011, 2006, 2001; Sao Tome and Principe, 2002, 2012).

International and national NGOs also gave contributions, some of them financed by the EU, as well as by other traditional donors. Among the initiatives financed by the EU, the International Food Security Network project, which is supported by Action Aid and FIAN International, stands out. The latter was designed to support the formation of national civil society networks and experience-sharing between networks. Hence, REDSAN-PALOP and REDSAN-CPLP emerged. The forms of contact that gave rise to these networks were promoted by experts, in some cases, linked or egressed from centers for the dissemination of public policy ideas and Brazilian universities (REDSAN-PALOP, 2008; Sarmiento & Pinto, 2015)<sup>11</sup>. Together with the CPLP Peasant Platform, REDSAN-CPLP comprises the Facilitation Mechanism for Civil Society Participation in CONSAN-CPLP. In addition to promoting networks, the EU supported projects which, among other activities, promoted local purchases for school feeding in Sao Tome and Príncipe<sup>12</sup> and Guinea-Bissau<sup>13</sup>, just as Luxembourger cooperation supported similar projects in Cape Verde (Luxemburgo, 2015).

Despite the progressive intentions expressed both in the Strategic Paper for Poverty Reduction and in the subsequent sectorial strategies, overall, these documents presented a low

<sup>10</sup> Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). <http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/prsp.aspx#HeadingA>

<sup>11</sup> Throughout the interviews, civil society representatives narrated the process of forming national and regional networks.

<sup>12</sup> Instituto Marquês de Valle Flor. Projeto Descentralizado de Segurança Alimentar em São Tomé e Príncipe (PDSA/STP) – Fase II <https://www.imvf.org/project/projeto-descentralizado-de-seguranca-alimentar-pdsa-ii/>

<sup>13</sup> UE-ACTIVA. Acções Colectivas e Territoriais Integradas para a Valorização da Agricultura. <http://www.imvf.org/index.php?projeto=1555&tag=-UE-ACTIVA-Acoes-Coletivas-e-Territoriais-Integradas-para-a-Valorizacao-da-Agricultura-Eixo-1:-Governacao-Territorial>. Accessed 14 Sept. 2017.



level of inter-sectorial integration, difficulties on budget allocation and on the effectiveness of social participation. Thus, ESAN-CPLP proposes the renewal of national documents under the perspective of intersectoriality and the construction of legal, institutional and budgetary frameworks to guarantee HRAF.

A central feature of the National Food and Nutritional Strategies developed since 2004, we can find the reference to the HRAF. From the elaboration of the first Strategies in Mozambique and Angola (Angola, 2009; Mozambique, 2007), to the most recent Plans and Strategies (Cape Verde, 2015a; Sao Tomé e Príncipe, 2012a; East Timor, 2014), there was the participation of Brazilian agents, mainly CONSEA members, as well as the gradual interaction of representatives of REDSAN-CPLP in these debates. These contacts had at least two effects, according to interviewed actors: favoring the opening of states to incorporate civil society contributions, and the higher qualification of civil society agents for the debates, mainly in comparison with the discussions of the first documents aimed at reducing poverty. The intention to develop inter-sectorial programs and dialogue with civil society for policy elaboration, monitoring and evaluation, was registered in National Plans and Strategies. Therefore, in the elaboration of Strategies, Plans and Legislation, advocacy work by various policy entrepreneurs was held for the dissemination and formation of political consensus in terms of concepts and practices related to FNS, HRAF and food sovereignty. The intention of establishing this conceptual framework consisted in building a legally recognized institutional space.

Lesson drawing was identified across all countries, as representatives of all these states were exposed to the Brazilian experience through missions in their countries and in Brazil, following the recommendations of the UN, which supported missions and projects. Besides lesson drawing, elements of emulation were observed – the latter involves the transfer of ideas that compose the policy or the program - and, in general, a process of inspiration (when politics in one state inspires a change in policies in another country). In this case, as an inspiration factor, the whole scenario of attempting to improve FNS policies is highlighted.

Over time, the difficulty of applying proposals described in the Strategies has evinced a process of emulation that did not correspond to the conditions of countries in terms of institutional culture, but which at the same time sets precedents for new forms of interaction. This openness, even if only formally expressed to meet a political agenda induced by international cooperation, may or may not be exploited depending on the quality of the relations between government agents and civil society.

Each country had a particular cooperative trajectory. However, overall, considering what restricts or facilitates the transfer, the weight of the UN alignment and the presence of diversified Brazilian cooperation in the countries stands out as a positive factor. In contrast, the lack of financial and human resources and the difficulty of changes in institutional culture, make implementation difficult. Besides, the resource limitations of Brazilian cooperation, especially financial, was indicated as an element that did not facilitate the execution of more continuous and efficient projects which, in turn, lacked investment of partners' resources.

Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe established laws for their School Health and Food Programs (Sao Tome and Principe, 2012b; Cabo Verde, 2015b), while in Mozambique the National School Feeding Program (PRONAE in Portuguese) is in a consolidation and expansion process, supported by WFP and Brazil through the Center of Excellence, among other partners (Mozambique, 2016). In order to redress the difficulty of budget allocation, an agreement was signed between the WFP, the government of Mozambique and Russia for converting debt into financing for development programs, guaranteeing investments until 2021 to expand PRONAE's reach to 300 schools<sup>14</sup>. In Angola – a country that took total responsibility for school feeding in 2008 – as in East Timor and Guinea Bissau<sup>15</sup>, cooperation happened in a more fluid model, especially through study missions. Through the Center for Excellence against Hunger, based in Brasilia, cooperation with these countries continues, as the example of Guinea Bissau, which prepared the National Zero Hunger Strategy and a school feeding decree, with technical support from the WFP Center of Excellence and the WFP office in the country (WFP, 2019), clearly shows.

Regardless of the cooperation format developed, local purchases were registered in the regulations that governed school feeding in all these countries. Nonetheless, the Institutional consolidation of the markets in each country faces particular and cross-cutting challenges, such as difficulties in ministerial articulation, weakness in supporting family production, difficulty in establishing procedures compatible with the reality of family farmers and / or training them to meet the requirements of public tenders. In this scenario, the need to adjust purchasing laws to meet farmers' necessities is fundamental, including purchase and payment schedules. Despite the difficulties, especially in creating legislation that defines public

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<sup>14</sup> “Com apoio do Brasil, Moçambique revisa estratégia nacional de alimentação escolar.” UN Brasil. 19 Nov 2018. <https://nacoesunidas.org/com-apoio-do-brasil-mocambique-revisa-estrategia-nacional-de-alimentacao-escolar>. Accessed 29 Jan. 2020.

<sup>15</sup> In Guinea-Bissau, no formal projects were developed and in Timor-Leste, only Brazil's first initial project with the WFP was completed. In Guinea-Bissau, political difficulties have prevented the government from structuring a program and once again missions and support from the WFP Center of Excellence are being mobilized.

procurement as a social inclusion policy, incremental advances have been made, such as the efforts supported by FAO for implementing a national register of family farmers in Mozambique (FAO, 2018).

Pilot-projects with the participation of Brazilian cooperation were relevant for the identification of the aforementioned obstacles involving the purchase of products from family farmers for school meals. In this sense, despite small scale markets (mainly in Sao Tome and Príncipe and Mozambique), and several difficulties in the implementation process, the countries where cooperation was more robust revealed that technical cooperation could provide relevant experiences for institutional improvement<sup>16</sup>.

Besides the FAO, the WFP and the EU, several traditional partners were present in cooperation regarding school feeding in these countries, whether working or not in partnership with Brazil. At the PAA in Mozambique<sup>17</sup>, the United Kingdom supported the project namely in the evaluation and monitoring phase which, according to one of the interviewees, highlights the interest in understanding and evaluating Brazilian cooperation practices. Still in Mozambique, USAID collaborated with the PRONAE pilot project whilst the North American NGO Joint Aid Management supported another school feeding model which received donation products from the United States (Brazil, Mozambique & United States, 2016).

Cape Verde could rely on Brazilian technical cooperation support at the beginning of the transition from the management of WFP to the Cape Verdean government. However, the spacing between Brazilian missions gave room for Luxembourg's cooperation to stay ahead of cooperative work, even providing financial transfers, resources which Brazil does not offer. Even after the reduction of Brazilian cooperation, references to Brazilian policies were

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<sup>16</sup> In Sao Tome and Príncipe, observing the composition of the 2014 and 2015 menus shows the change from a basic basket made up of imported products to a growing introduction of local products with a notable increase in the frequency of vegetables, fruits, roots, tubers and fish, from family farming (Brazil, FAO & Sao Tome and Príncipe, 2015). According to a Brazilian consultant interviewed in 2017, the decentralization of PNASE resources to schools has facilitated the diversification of menus and with few resources it has been possible to buy a considerable variety of products. The incorporation of local products in the PNASE menu stimulated the purchase of products in the local / district markets. Before, purchases were concentrated in the large markets of São Tomé, which increased transportation costs.

<sup>17</sup> In Mozambique, the first phase of the PAA (2012-2013) supported farmers and cooperatives to adequately supply schools with locally produced food. However, until the farmers were able to fulfill the bureaucratic requirements, it was necessary to use intermediaries. The second phase (2014-2017) strengthened field operations, promoted learning activities, technical assistance and knowledge exchange, developed a monitoring system and carried out the evaluation of the initiative in Malawi and Senegal. The Phase II Evaluation Report indicates that 672 farmers benefited in Mozambique, 38.75% of whom were women. 40.57 tons of food, namely vegetables, were supplied to 8 557 students (International Policy Center for Inclusive Growth, 2017). The relative success of PAA in Tete Province was due to rural extension work, which is scarce in the country.

worked on by Luxembourg cooperation in the drafting of the School Food and Health Program law, as well as in the implementation of a pilot project for local purchases to supply schools. (Brazil, ABC, 2007).

In the creation of FNS Councils, three references are highlighted: CONSEA, CFS and CONSAN-CPLP. The latter two can count on the participation of the private sector, such as the National Councils created in the ESAN-CPLP scope (Cape Verde, 2013; East Timor, 2017; Mozambique, 2017; Sao Tome and Principe, 2016). Another fundamental characteristic that differentiated CONSEA from CONSAN Cape Verde lies on the fact that CONSEA was linked to the Presidency's structure, while the Council created in Cape Verde is linked to the Ministry of Agriculture. In this regard, African consultants and agents have warned of the difficulty to create an inter-sectorial institutional culture, when there is no centralizing element above the ministerial level. The statements made in the documents faced barriers to their practical implementation. In Angola, for example, the declared intention to create an FNS National Council was identified as a symbol of modernity when the National Strategy was elaborated in 2009, but that did not advance the effective forms of dialogue with civil society. Despite recent stated intentions, this body is not yet effectively functioning in Angola.

In Cape Verde, the review of the FNS strategy showed that structures similar to those reinforced by CPLP had already been devised in previous discussions, but had not been implemented until the creation of the National FNS Council. In Mozambique, up to the creation of the Council in 2017, the Secretariat for Food and Nutritional Security, an organ linked to the Ministry of Agriculture, constituted an example of how a body concentrated in technical functions had difficulty in advancing political agendas. With the structuring of the National Council, Mozambique is now making efforts to establish provincial councils. Timor-Leste and Guinea Bissau have also established their Councils with the participation of civil society and Zero Hunger Strategies, with the support of UN agencies and the participation of FNS networks operating in each country.

These structures presented only a reduced opening for civil society participation, marked by few seats and the reduced number of meetings throughout the year. This situation raises questions about the ability of civil society to make effective demands on policies, as well as the real capacity for inter-sectorial articulation to be effectively handled. The observation of the functioning of the Cape Verdean Council has shown that the articulation sought by this body is developing slowly. However, it is worth mentioning that since the creation of the Council, reforms have been made to include the more active participation of

civil society representatives, with the expansion of seats for this category. After the creation of the Council in 2016, the São Tomé and Príncipe representative stated that after the outset of work, the civil society network also intended to put pressure on the government to expand seats for civil society.

The future of the Councils divides opinions. If, on the one hand, the creation of the structure opens space for improvement, on the other hand, the most pessimistic opinions point out the risk that these bodies will not be functional since they were created without the maturing of the internal dialogue between civil society and government. Among the common points on the councils' agendas, the following can be pointed out: issues of internal structuring, school feeding programs, information sharing between ministries and the creation of laws to promote the HRAF. Cape Verde was the first country to have a specific law on this topic approved by Parliament in 2018<sup>18</sup>.

Overall, social participation and intersectoriality are principles that still require great maturity in the Community countries, however, cooperation has left some effects on partners' institutional memory over time, which varies from country to country. Marks of this construction are the drafting of laws on school feeding programs, the improvement of national strategies and the construction of Councils. Nevertheless, the effects of institutional memory can be fragile in practical terms, mainly due to political changes that may lead to changes in political priorities, but also in highly trained technical teams. These issues are major challenges to the success of policy transfer, as they relate to the consolidation of institutional memory. The latter requires the political priority sometimes identified by the informants as weak or absent. The current situation in Brazil exemplifies how political setbacks influence the implementation of social policies and civil society participation in the policy cycle.

ESAN-CPLP marks a prominent event in the Community, as the initiative was able to bring together civil society and government actors to support national initiatives, in which CONSAN-CPLP has become a space where civil society has been able to express its priorities. The launching of the Community Guidelines for Support and Promotion of Family Farming (CPLP 2017), a document developed with the contributions of multi-stakeholders, was an example of the Council's unifying discussions. Among other points, the Document proposes the identification of family farming in order to establish social policies designed for this segment. Currently, discussions revolve around the national appropriation of these

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<sup>18</sup> "Com apoio do Brasil, Moçambique revisa estratégia nacional de alimentação escolar." UN Brasil. 19 Nov 2018. <https://nacoesunidas.org/com-apoio-do-brasil-mocambique-revisa-estrategia-nacional-de-alimentacao-escolar/>. Accessed 29 Jan. 2020.

Guidelines, which serve as a point of reference for civil society to demand concrete positions from governments.

Despite the difficulties faced by National FNS Networks, Focal Points of Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe highlighted that their respective national networks or working group have become recognized interlocutors in the national debate, being actively involved in policy advice and other actions. One of CONSAN-CPLP's fundamental ideas is to act as a link between the national and global levels, which is why the CPLP regional initiative gained prominence within the scope of the CFS. However, for this multilevel relationship to be consistent, national and regional structures still need to follow a difficult path of institutional consolidation in line with the principle of inclusive governance and effective inter-sectorial coordination.

## **VI. Conclusion**

This article has intended to demonstrate the dynamics of a transnational policy transfer network formation by analyzing Brazil's performance as a developer - a role gradually built since the mid-2000s when Brazilian diplomacy invested efforts in projecting Brazilian's fight against hunger, mainly in its South-South relations. The Portuguese Speaking Countries and the CPLP in particular, fit perfectly into a scenario in which Brazil delivers a discourse pillared on moral duty, linguistic-cultural affinities and comparative advantages in relation to other partners. As a result, various partners were attracted to promote the Food and Nutritional Security Agenda, particularly UN agencies.

The CPLP space achieved further development of both civil society and government interaction, which have favored the diffusion of Brazilian policies and provided the formation of spaces for experience-sharing. These interactions constructed over time have even inspired initiatives of traditional donors that supported the agendas built in this process, through triangular or bilateral partnerships and project financing. Thus, the present work provides evidence of the advocacy endeavors of several policy entrepreneurs towards the dissemination and formation of political consensus in terms of the concepts and practices related to RHAF. In empirical terms, considering that the information regarding South-South cooperation is fragmented, given the difficulties of formal monitoring and evaluation, the work collaborates with studies in the area in an attempt to analyze processes that involve relations between governments and societies.

Studying the performance of networks in this way helps to clarify the complex interaction between states and an international agenda also built by non-state, transnational and international actors. South-South cooperation analysis is a challenging topic, as long steps are required to achieve small goals. Furthermore, the results of the cooperation do not guarantee irreversible or progressive processes, since the consolidation of policies depends on the capacity of institutional memory and the political will of the governments. From the interviewees' narratives, current research indicates that the personal articulation capacity of actors as consultants, technicians and politicians, who share affinities of ideas and interest in promoting the institutions they integrate, constitute factors of influence in the progress of cooperative dynamics, as indicated in the literature provided. Therefore, political changes can undermine or stagnate collective constructions, as can be seen in the case of Brazil itself. Indeed, the recent political changes in Brazil under President Bolsonaro, like the dismantling of the national CONSEA and weakening of social policies, in general, by severe budget cuts, have undermined the cooperation focus on the social agenda. In this scenario, which also generates the downfall of the attempt to project the country as a developer, given the weakening of domestic policy and well as the loss of centrality of South-South relations in its external policy, the Community's civil society representatives will need the creative capacity to remain active and purposeful. Thus, dialogue spaces, as well as the search for alternative support and financing need to be reinforced in order to strengthen society organizations and social movements in their relationship with the state.

The present research has shown both the strengths of South-South cooperation as well as the lack of resources that hindered the development of continuous actions. Despite the difficulties, small progress identified in each national context evinces the gains achieved through cooperation. Notwithstanding the fact that social participation has been reinforced in the international cooperation discourse as a legitimacy aggregator, it is notable that there is still great difficulty in bringing the demands of civil society to the level of effective political decisions. This situation indicates the purposeful passivity of civil society concerning policy construction.

Within the scope of this thematic and geographic area, other issues can be explored based on different theoretical frameworks. It is worth emphasizing that the relationships between networks and International Regimes can be indicated as themes for future research. Further in-depth analyses can also be conducted for each country, particularly those concerning relations between the state and civil society, with a special focus on synergies and tensions between them. Moreover, the current topic includes a variety of symbolic issues,

procedures practices and impacts of South-South, triangular and networked cooperation which may indicate paths for future further research.

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