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**Beneficiary country ownership and the politics of
partnership in trilateral development cooperation: a
case study of Zambia**

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Geography

University of Durham

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Abstract

Global discourses on trilateral development cooperation (TDC) have overlooked the experiences of beneficiary countries and focused on the concerns of development cooperation providers. This is a significant gap given that TDC is increasingly being promoted as a modality that supports country ownership, equality between Northern and Southern partners, and efforts to achieve the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development. In response, this study draws on the case of Zambia to examine how the politics of partnership affect a beneficiary country's experience with exercising ownership and leadership of TDC projects. It employs an institutional ethnography based on key stakeholder interviews and archival analysis, to capture the beneficiary perspective of country ownership and partnerships. It also engages with postcolonial perspectives on development cooperation to gain insight into how power and agency operate in the production and dissemination of development knowledge.

The study finds that Zambian approaches to country ownership in TDC differ from definitions in global policy frameworks and reflect institutionalised responses to the experiences of colonial governance and donor dominance. This demonstrates the significance of a more nuanced understanding of beneficiary agency and the historical context of partnerships. The study also demonstrates that TDC is intertwined with the geopolitical and commercial interests of partner countries, although the dominant policy narratives prefer to concentrate on the technical aspects of project management. It also illustrates the diverse ways in which Zambian stakeholders navigate these challenges and concludes that a beneficiary country can achieve real and observable development outcomes from TDC, despite the politics of partnership. However, it argues that Zambia's ability to ensure the sustainability of development outcomes are constrained by internal dynamics, rather than the underlying ambitions or power inequalities with its development cooperation providers. The findings contribute fresh insight into debates on the changing geographies of global development and emerging literature on the politics of knowledge production in South-South/trilateral cooperation research.

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List of Abbreviations

ACCA21	Administrative Centre for China's Agenda 21
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
BAPA	Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IE	Institutional Ethnography
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFEZ	Multi-facility Economic Zone
MoU	Memoranda of Understanding
NAM	Non-aligned Movement
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PMU	Project Management Unit
RETT	Renewable Energy Technology Transfer
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SSC	South-South Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TDC	Trilateral Development Cooperation
ToH	Triangle of Hope
TICAD	Tokyo International Conference on African Development
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNZA	University of Zambia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
ZDA	Zambia Development Agency

Statement of Copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my father, Martin Mataa Kamwengo. He set me on this path by encouraging my interest in international affairs and recognising it as academic potential when many others saw it as an odd interest for a young girl. Over a decade has passed since he transitioned to a better life, but his passion for research, writing and lifelong learning continues to motivate me today.

1

Introduction

International development cooperation was a topic of intense academic and public discussion a decade ago. At the time, extensive campaigns to ‘make poverty history’ in Africa had stirred the international community into action, but also intensified debates on beneficiary agency and the power of representation (Whitfield 2009; Harrison 2010). There were also growing demands for aid to come to an end, as the rapid rise in volumes of economic cooperation from ‘emerging’ Southern powers began to substantiate arguments that trade and not aid was more desirable (Moyo 2009; Carmody 2011). In recent years, the global political economy has undergone numerous changes, which have seen development cooperation fade into the background of scholarly debates. First, several developing countries have experienced significant poverty reduction, economic growth and reduced their overall aid dependence (Fosu 2017). Second, budgetary pressure after the 2008-9 global financial crisis forced most members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development- Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) to reassess the scope of their development programmes and their list of priority countries (Cammack 2012). In addition, most Northern development cooperation providers have begun to concentrate their aid allocations in emerging economies that are deemed vital trade partners or fragile countries that are considered security risks as sources of terrorism or illegal immigration. The focus of international development policy has also shifted, more broadly, from poverty reduction to private sector-led economic growth.

These changes have stimulated various development cooperation providers, including the United Kingdom, to explore opportunities to shift future responsibility for the financing/delivery of aid to the private sector (Mawdsley 2015; McVeigh 2018). Subsequently, some observers have begun to question whether we are witnessing the death of ‘development’ as an ideology and a goal (Hickel 2014; Brooks 2017). In spite of these changes, development cooperation has remained an important mechanism for addressing poverty, inequality, conflict and environmental degradation in low and

middle-income countries. Many Northern countries have recognised that it is in their national interest to address these problems in the global South since they result in negative consequences, such as climate change, that are felt across the global divide (e.g. Danida 2017). This thesis is primarily concerned with trilateral development cooperation (TDC), a relatively new modality in which a Southern development cooperation provider and a Northern development cooperation provider (that is, an OECD-DAC member and/or a multilateral institution) work together to support a Southern beneficiary partner.¹

Diverse countries have participated in TDC projects, but the United Nations (UN) and OECD have consolidated their role as brokers of development knowledge by establishing multiple platforms to enhance knowledge and use of South-South/trilateral development cooperation. For example, the OECD-DAC established the Global Partnership Initiative on Effective Triangular Cooperation in November 2016 to strengthen the use of TDC amongst its members (OECD 2017). The UN also organised the 2nd High-level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation in March 2019, almost forty years after the first forum produced the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among development countries (BAPA). Significantly, the 2019 conference (also referred to as BAPA+40) hailed TDC as a ‘win-win’ modality that could assist beneficiary countries to achieve priorities in their national development plans and global targets in the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development (UN 2019). However, despite its growing importance and predictions that it may eclipse bilateral cooperation to become the preferred modality of international development cooperation in the future, TDC has not attracted significant critical analysis outside of policy circles.

The majority of the existing policy literature focuses instead on the technical aspects of implementing a TDC project, such as administration and coordination amongst the different partners (e.g. Fordelone 2009; Kato 2012; OECD 2017; UNDP 2017a).

¹ The definition of the global North-global South and Northern cooperation provider-Southern cooperation provider employed in this thesis is explained on page 23.

These policy texts construct TDC as a progressive modality that supports country ownership and equality between all partners. However, as McEwan and Mawdsley (2012, p.1187) first pointed out, a nuanced and critical analysis of TDC has to take into account the political nature of development cooperation and the uneven power relations between the different actors enrolled within it. This is especially important given that previous studies have illustrated the diverse ways in which Northern and Southern countries have used bilateral cooperation to advance their diplomatic and commercial interests, set policy agendas, and to socialize the beneficiaries of their development cooperation into adopting their norms and value systems (e.g. Sogge 2002; Lancaster 2007; Farias 2018; Power 2019).

Analyses of TDCs role in the changing geographies of power and development is slowly emerging in international relations and development studies (McEwan and Mawdsley 2012; Abdenur and Da Fonseca 2013; Fingermann 2015; Lengfelder 2016; Zhang 2017). However, most of these studies have not applied critical theory to understand the practice of TDC, although studies such as Zhang (2017) and Abdenur and Da Fonseca (2013) have attempted to theorise the underlying motives that are influencing development cooperation providers to engage in TDC.² In addition, the current debates are mostly focussed on the providers of development cooperation while very little is known or understood about the experiences of beneficiary countries. This is a significant gap, given that the international community has recognised country ownership as a core principle of effective development cooperation, based on the assumption that beneficiary leadership over the design and implementation of a development intervention increases its responsiveness to local needs and result in observable changes that stand the test of time (OECD 2011).

The knowledge gaps identified above are partially a result of there being only a limited amount of information on country cases collected and made available by the main institutions involved in the implementation of TDC (Lengfelder 2016; UN 2019). Consequently, this thesis aims to address these gaps through an empirically based

² The literature reviewed for this research is limited to English language publications.

analysis of how the politics of partnership affects and determines a beneficiary country's experience with exercising ownership and leadership of TDC. It will specifically engage with postcolonial critiques on power, agency and knowledge production, in order to examine country ownership of TDC projects in Zambia. As the discussion in Chapter Two will demonstrate, postcolonial perspectives offer rich insight into the roots of the unequal power relations that characterise North-South cooperation and continue to challenge the notion that beneficiary countries can easily exercise 'ownership' of development interventions (e.g. Baaz 2005). Postcolonial approaches have enabled studies such as Six (2009) to demonstrate that developing countries collectively challenge understandings of development cooperation in the global North through their emphasis on anti-colonialism and non-interference in South-South cooperation (SSC). Postcolonial theories can also cast light on how power inequalities disenfranchise marginalised groups in South-South relations (Davies and Boehmer 2019). This makes postcolonialism a constructive theoretical framework for problematizing the complex nature of a South-South-North trilateral development partnership, as well as ongoing claims that TDC can enhance development effectiveness.

From Competition to Collaboration in Policy Spaces

The origins of TDC lie in the 1978 UN Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries where members states agreed to support the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation amongst development countries (widely known as BAPA). Ekoko and Benn (2002) note that the commitment to BAPA was based on the recognition that Southern expertise was at times more relevant and cost-effective in countries with similar histories and development challenges than that provided by Northern partners. Thereafter, developing countries established several networks regionally and within the United

Nations system, to promote South-South technical cooperation.³ Some Northern cooperation providers, such as Japan, also developed technical training programmes to facilitate South-South knowledge exchanges (Kato 2012). Subsequently, trilateral development cooperation (TDC) emerged in the 1990s as a modality through which Northern partners could formally support the transfer and adaptation of knowledge on innovative policies, programmes or technologies that have proved successful in one Southern country to the context of another country facing similar challenges, e.g. poverty reduction, food security, social protection, disaster management and conflict resolution (Ekoko and Benn 2002).

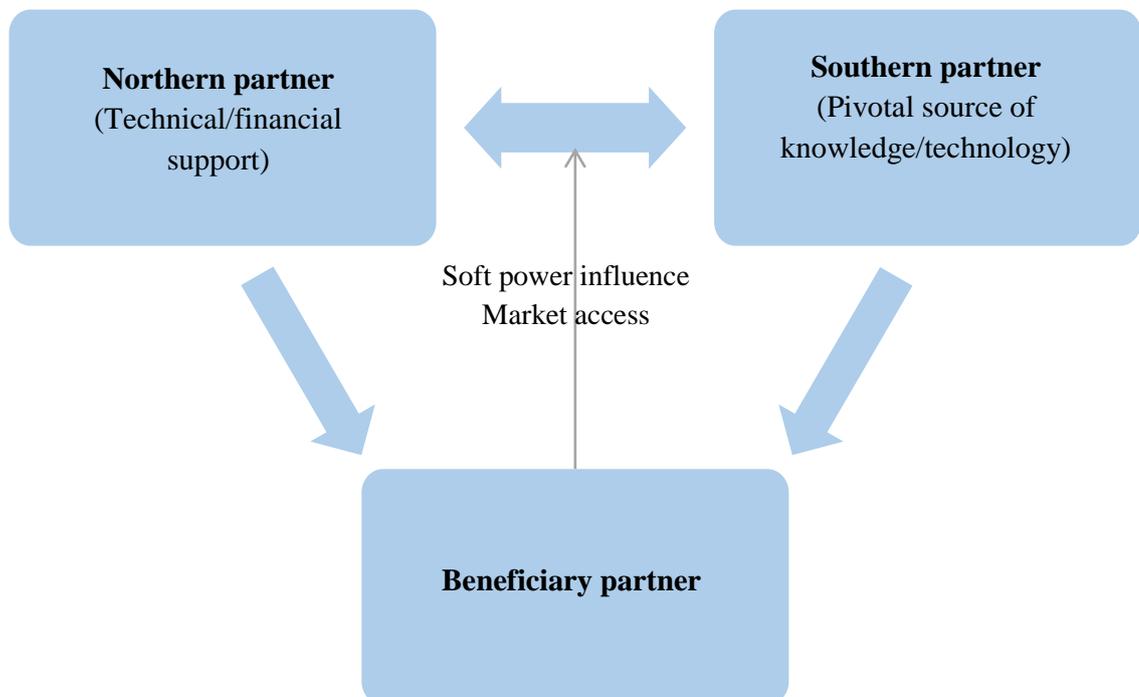
Contemporary TDC is still generally centred on technical cooperation and lays emphasis on developing the beneficiary's capacity to generate its own development solutions (UNOSSC 2018). The term 'triangular', which refers to partnerships involving three actors, is often used in place of trilateral in policy documents, but in practice, TDC initiatives can involve multiple beneficiaries or development cooperation providers and in some cases, all partners may come from the same geographic region. As Figure 1 illustrates, the Southern cooperation provider is often referred to as the 'pivotal' partner because the trilateral exchange is anchored in transferring it technology or technical knowledge to the beneficiary partner. The Northern cooperation provider often plays the role of the 'facilitator' through its provision of either financial resources and/or technical support to the partnership, based on its best practice in project management and aid delivery (Fordelone 2009). However, this thesis will demonstrate that the development cooperation providers indirectly gain soft power influence and market access in the beneficiary country.

At present, the main stakeholders in TDC tend to be government institutions but research institutions, civil society organisations and the private sector are often included in the project implementation process (OECD 2017). Japan, Germany and Norway are the top OECD-DAC members engaging in trilateral cooperation; the

³ This includes the Group of 77 (G77) and the Special Unit for Technical cooperation amongst developing countries (TCDC) which is now known as the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) and operates under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

United Nations (UN) organisations are the leading multilateral partners; and most beneficiaries are low-income or middle-income countries from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia-Pacific and Central Asia (*ibid*). TDC is unique for enabling Southern countries which do not have sufficient financial/administrative resources to dedicate towards development cooperation activities, to transfer their technical knowledge to other countries. In so doing, TDC has given these countries access to some of the benefits associated with being a development cooperation provider (such as diplomatic prestige and influence). For this reason, the OECD has praised TDC for being a modality that transcends the divide between countries from the global North that have traditionally been development cooperation providers and those from the global South that have been beneficiary partners (OECD 2017, p.8). The UN Secretary-General has also hailed TDC as a modality that “offers opportunities to explore synergies and complementarities between diverse actors and to strengthen the ownership of all partners” (UN 2018, p.5).

Figure 1: The dynamics of trilateral development cooperation



(Source: Author)

Ideally, it is envisaged that each partner in a TDC initiative should play an active role in the design, implementation and evaluation of the project, but the beneficiary partner should have ownership over the whole process in order for the intervention to be effective (that is, for it to generate observable and sustainable development outcomes). However, it has been repeatedly observed that many TDC projects struggle from low levels of beneficiary country ownership (Fordelone 2009; UNDP 2017a). Most policy-oriented studies tend to attribute the beneficiary's failure to take up ownership to corruption or institutional capacity weaknesses in planning and coordination. These technical and managerial challenges are significant but there is also a political dimension to aid and development found in bilateral relations that also challenges efforts to achieve beneficiary country ownership and inclusive partnerships in TDC as the next section highlights.

The Politics of Partnership

The recent interest in TDC is part of the wider transformation that the international development landscape has undergone since China, India and Brazil emerged between 2000 and 2010 as the most prominent development cooperation providers outside of the OECD-DAC. Each country has a distinct approach to aid delivery. However, they distinguished themselves by officially stating that their development activities could not be understood through the official development assistance model (ODA) followed by DAC members, but rather as a part of South-South Cooperation (SSC)⁴ (Park 2011). As the discussion in Chapter Two will show, SSC has historically involved a combination of political, economic and development cooperation between developing countries and laid emphasis on the principles of non-interference in the affairs of other countries and mutually beneficial relations. Hence China, India, and Brazil did not

⁴ Most Southern development cooperation providers tend to focus on technical cooperation and humanitarian assistance. Wealthier countries such as China and India also provide finances (loans/grants), resources-for-infrastructure exchanges and military assistance.

attach policy and transparency conditions to their development programmes and they also made increased trade and investments an integral part of their SSC. Most beneficiary governments from Africa and the Asia-Pacific region embraced the plurality in modalities (i.e. grants, loans, technical cooperation, military assistance, trade and investments) and relative autonomy offered by their Southern partners (see Cheru and Obi 2010; Power *et al.* 2012; Hameiri 2015). However, the rest of the international community began to speculate on their motives and the implications of their approach to development cooperation, which differed starkly from DAC's framework, with the harshest critics presenting them as 'predatory' and harmful to the prospects for sustainable development in the poorest countries (e.g. Naim 2007).

Attempts were made to convince the 'rising powers' to adopt the aid effectiveness reforms that came out of the 2005 Paris High-Level Forum (Manning 2006). China, India and Brazil rejected these efforts and argued that the aid effectiveness agenda was based on the need to reform practices found in North-South cooperation. They also emphasised their activities were less concerned with aid and more of "an act of solidarity based on common struggles" aimed at achieving mutual benefits with other developing countries, which enabled them to construct their relations with beneficiary partners as 'horizontal' and 'respectful' (Mawdsley 2012). As will be seen in Chapter Two, this discourse can be traced to South-South solidarity movements that emerged in the 1950s and the Bandung Asia-Africa Conference. Their approach to development cooperation heightened long-standing criticisms of the hierarchal nature of North-South relations and created competitive pressure for the OECD-DAC. Northern countries attempted to persuade China, India and Brazil to agree on a universal framework to govern international development cooperation, but these efforts were rejected out of concern that they "might obscure particularities of SSC and impose rules that developing countries are not ready to adopt" (Sidiropoulos *et al.* 2015).

A shift from competition to cooperation began to emerge at the 2011 Busan High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness where Northern cooperation providers acknowledged the different but complementary nature of SSC. The Busan Declaration also emphasised the need for more collaborative efforts so as to ensure

that the effectiveness of all forms of development cooperation provided to beneficiary countries is maximized (see OECD 2011). During this period, several countries from the global South such as South Africa, Thailand, Malaysia, Colombia, and Indonesia, either established or expanded their development cooperation programmes and showed a willingness to collaborate with OECD-DAC members in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) that emerged from Busan. However, China, India and Brazil opted to develop alternative networks to evaluate and improve the delivery of their development cooperation activities, such as the network of Southern Think Tanks (see Sidiropoulos *et al.* 2015).

In the midst of all these changes, numerous development scholars and policymakers have repeatedly stressed that the focus of debates should not be on how developing countries are ‘victims’ of competing interests or on whose approach to development cooperation is appropriate. Instead, the debates should be about how all sides can contribute to improving the capacity for beneficiaries to take charge of their own development and to become self-reliant (see Der Spiegel 2010; Glennie 2016). This is an important argument given that the economies of most low-income countries have improved considerably over the last decade, thereby diminishing their need for development finance and shifting their development priorities to improving the capacity of their institutional and human resources (GPEDC 2016; Fosu 2017). It is against this background that trilateral development cooperation (TDC) has increasingly been explored for its potential to optimise the strengths of Northern and Southern cooperation providers towards capacity development and mutual learning in partner countries (OECD 2017).

There is also growing interest in exploring how Northern cooperation providers can utilise TDC to access opportunities in and exercise influence over current and former beneficiaries of their bilateral cooperation, and how Southern cooperation providers can potentially use TDC as a strategic instrument to expand their soft power influence. Lengfelder’s (2016) study of Germany’s motivations for engaging in TDC has found that it is seeking to develop strategic trade partnerships, to test policy solutions for challenges such as migration and climate change and, to co-opt SSC providers into

adopting OECD-DAC standards for effective development cooperation. The tutelage objective is shared by other Northern cooperation providers and has been a source of tension with Southern cooperation providers, particularly China, India and Brazil. These Southern cooperation providers perceive it as an indirect method for Northern cooperation providers to reassert their power over the global development architecture in the post-global financial crisis-era, in which their authority is questioned (Sidiropoulos *et al.* 2015). In the past, African beneficiary governments were equally hesitant to participate in TDC, due to concerns that their Southern partners would be coaxed into adopting Northern cooperation providers preference for strict transparency and accountability conditions (The Guardian 2010). There was also concern that the harmonisation of Northern and Southern development cooperation would diminish the beneficiary country's ability to play different development partners off against each other. However, in recent years prominent Southern development cooperation providers and beneficiary countries have become more open to engaging in TDC projects with multilateral organisations from the UN system and some OECD-DAC members (see UNOSSC 2018).

It is not clear from existing literature how these TDC partnerships are negotiating differences over transparency and accountability conditions, or if the SSC principle of non-interference in the affairs of other countries is instead being upheld in TDC. As the discussion in Chapter Two will show, the principle of non-interference, the discourse of horizontality and 'the imaginary of similarities' in South-South relations (based on geography, socio-political history and development experiences) has been key to cementing the legitimacy and power that prominent Southern cooperation providers hold as the new 'authorities' on development knowledge (Rhee 2011). However, as Hurrell (2006) points out, being a great power is closely related to notions of legitimacy and authority. It is for this reason, Abdenur and Da Fonseca (2013) suggest that Northern partners, who have widely been criticised for being paternalistic, are trying to re-establish their legitimacy as development cooperation providers through TDC. There is also evidence that Southern cooperation providers have opened up to collaborating in TDC with OECD countries in order to reform their development practices and their global reputation. For example, Chinese officials have openly

stated that they want to expand their involvement in TDC to learn from Northern expertise on the management and delivery of development cooperation, and to reposition China as “a responsible development actor” (Han 2017; Zhang 2017).

Northern cooperation providers have also become more open to learning from the policy experiences of some of their Southern partners in what is referred to as South-North cooperation. For example, Brazil has shared unique policy experiences from the management of its national healthcare system with health officials from the United Kingdom (Constantine and Shankland 2017). Northern cooperation providers have also moved away from simply critiquing or trying to co-opt Southern partners into adopting their best practice to actually following some of their practices, such as the explicit merging of development cooperation with national interests (see Mawdsley 2018). These developments have substantiated arguments in past studies that have suggested that Northern and Southern cooperation providers appear to be more motivated by what they can get from each other in TDC partnerships (whether this is knowledge, commercial opportunities, prestige or legitimacy) rather than the beneficiary country’s ownership and ensuring that a project’s outcomes are effective in the long-term (McEwan and Mawdsley 2012; Abdenur and Da Fonseca 2013). Several studies have even observed that the majority of TDC initiatives are usually developed from memoranda of understanding (MoU) between Northern and Southern cooperation providers, and beneficiaries are often only included in the process of designing the project plan and its implementation (e.g. Kato 2012; Stahl 2012; OECD 2017).

The problem with a TDC project that is driven by the plans of the development cooperation provider and not the demands of the beneficiary country, is that it can diminish feelings of ownership in the beneficiary country since the development cooperation provider essentially owns the project’s overall objective. An additional risk is that a TDC project may facilitate the transfer of Southern knowledge that is not always suitable for adaptation in beneficiary countries (for example, see research on the transfer of Brazilian agricultural techniques to African countries in Cabral *et al.* 2016). Furthermore, the discourse of horizontality in SSC tends to mask the reality

that there are unequal power relations between Southern countries and that these differences can present diverse challenges on the implementation of development projects. For example, Marcondes and Mawdsley (2017) point out that the Brazilian government threatened to cease technical cooperation to El Salvador after the latter refused to recognise a change in leadership following the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016.

The experiences and perceptions of beneficiary countries have not been addressed in most policy and academic research on TDC. However, it is important to recognise that they are not passive partners and that they must also have strategic motives driving their participation in TDC with partner countries. Research on African development has shown that beneficiary governments sometimes secure bilateral cooperation for development projects that could otherwise be funded using domestic resources, in order to strategically free up domestic resources for use in economic/social sectors that do not attract donor support or for any other purposes (Whitfield 2009; Carmody and Kragelund 2016). In addition, factors such as a change in political leadership, conflicting stakeholder interests and power inequalities within the beneficiary country have also been found to have an impact on beneficiary ownership of bilateral development interventions and their outcomes (Nordtveit 2009). In the light of the complex politics of partnership discussed above, this thesis is concerned with examining how power inequalities, political changes, conflicting stakeholder interests and ideologies on what constitutes effective partnerships affect beneficiary ownership of TDC.

Research Objectives

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, TDC is a relatively new and under-researched modality. The majority of existing literature on TDC is policy-oriented and lacks critical conceptualisation of the complex politics and power relations inherent in a South-South-North development partnership. In addition, very little is known or understood about the experiences of beneficiary countries from the available literature.

In response to these knowledge gaps, the primary objective of this study is to carry out an empirical case study of a beneficiary country's experience with exercising ownership and leadership of a TDC project. The second objective of this thesis is to develop a theoretically informed critique of how the politics of partnership affects beneficiary country ownership in TDC. It specifically draws on postcolonial perspectives on development due to their emphasis on and commitment to recovering the voices of 'the subaltern' or actors who are marginalised in global discourses, such as beneficiary countries. A postcolonial lens creates space for this study to theorise from the experiences of the diverse stakeholders in the beneficiary country and to open up to alternative explanations that they may have on development cooperation activities. It also enables this study to demonstrate the machinations of power within TDC, how this relates to the production and dissemination of development knowledge, and the significance of a more nuanced understanding of beneficiary country agency.

Zambia makes an interesting case study because it is an example of a lower middle-income country whose political terrain has been relatively stable since its independence in 1964, but whose development landscape has been constrained by an inability to overcome its colonial legacy of a mono-economy (almost entirely dependent on copper export earnings) and weaknesses in its institutional and human resource capacity. Zambia has historically accepted development cooperation from diverse Northern and Southern partners to address these challenges, but research has shown that the government has occasionally experienced difficulty with negotiating and asserting its preferences in aid negotiations (Saasa and Carlsson 1996; Fraser 2009; Prizzon 2013). Most of the development cooperation that the country receives is provided on a bilateral basis, however, TDC operating under the framework of South-South cooperation has recently become a part of the local development landscape. This thesis will specifically focus on two case studies: the Japan-Zambia-Malaysia Triangle of Hope investment promotion project (2006–12) and the China-Zambia-UNDP-Denmark renewable energy technology transfer project (2014–9).

Research Questions

The overall aim of this thesis is to investigate whether TDC has the ability to result in effective and sustainable development outcomes for beneficiary countries, in spite of the complex politics of partnership. Drawing on the case studies in Zambia, the research questions derived to deliver this aim are as follows:

1. What is the nature of partnerships developed through TDC?
2. To what extent does the politics of partnership support or undermine beneficiary ownership in trilateral development projects?
3. What are the consequences for development effectiveness in Zambia?
4. What lessons might be learned for TDC more broadly?

Through its findings, the thesis aims to inform debates on contemporary South-South cooperation and its influence on the changing geographies of power and development (Mawdsley 2012; Carmody 2013; Rosser and Tubilewicz 2016; Power 2019). It also aims to contribute to debates on the norms that should guide international development cooperation (Chandy and Kharas 2011; Sidiropoulos *et al.* 2015). The insights gained on development effectiveness from this research are also of relevance to international development scholars, practitioners and multilateral forums that negotiate, manage or monitor development cooperation activities.

North-South: Definition and Terminology

The use of the terms ‘global North’ or ‘global South’ to categorise countries is as much of a problematic over-generalisation as the ‘First World’ or ‘Third World’ classification given that the countries in each geographic region have different levels of economic wealth, political influence, poverty and inequality. However, the terms ‘developed country’ and ‘developing country’ are used where appropriate in this thesis, not to indicate a hierarchy, but to distinguish between relatively industrialised/wealthy countries and countries with higher levels of poverty. The

North-South distinction and terms such as ‘development cooperation provider’ or ‘partner’ are also employed due to their acceptance in contemporary policy circles and academic literature. For the purpose of this study, the term ‘Northern partner’ should be understood as referring to the traditional members of the OECD-DAC (from Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan) as well as multilateral institutions from the United Nations system, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund (IMF). The definition of the global South and the countries that can be described as a ‘Southern partner’ is far more complicated and can be contested as studies such as Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Daley (2019) have shown. However, this thesis employs the term Southern partner to refer to countries from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Within this diverse grouping, it is acknowledged that South Korea, Chile and other high-income countries have either joined the OECD-DAC in recent years or signalled that they wish to become members.

Thesis Outline

This thesis comprises a total of seven chapters. Chapter Two outlines the conceptual framework and the historical importance of country ownership in international development cooperation. It draws on postcolonial perspectives on power, agency and knowledge production to cast light on the political nature of development cooperation, the significance of non-conditionality and self-reliance in post-colonial countries, and the rationale for concentrating on the beneficiary country’s agency and perspective on TDC. It also problematizes the notion that TDC promotes ‘equality’ between partners by exploring how knowledge transfers enable hegemonic Northern and Southern development cooperation providers to define the space for a beneficiary country to control its development trajectory. Chapter Three sets out the rationale for case study selection, the methodological approach and the data collection methods of this study. It provides an overview of how an institutional ethnography (IE) based on key stakeholder interviews and archival analysis was employed to collect and analyse data on country ownership of TDC. My positionality as a ‘Southern’ researcher is also

discussed in addition to the difficulties involved in researching country ownership of TDC where the main stakeholders are critical government institutions such as finance, trade, energy and foreign affairs. The chapter also highlights the limitations and ethical challenges this imposed on data collection, how these were navigated and the wider implications for research into South-South/trilateral development cooperation.

Chapter Four situates the ToH and RETT project case studies within the history of national planning and donor relations in Zambia in order to provide a deeper understanding of beneficiary agency and the nature of partnerships in TDC. It demonstrates that Zambian approaches to country ownership in TDC differ from the dominant definitions in global policy frameworks and reflect institutionalised responses to the country's experiences of colonial governance and donor dominance during a period of aid dependency in the 1980s and 1990s. It also demonstrates how notions that Zambia can use South-South/trilateral development cooperation to address its persistent skilled labour shortages and achieve self-reliance, are influenced by ideas from the dependency and modernisation schools of thought. Chapter Five examines the extent to which the politics of partnership supports or undermines beneficiary country ownership of TDC. It demonstrates the diverse ways in which Zambian stakeholders manage the political and commercial interests that underlie TDC at the global, national, and institutional scale. Chapter Six examines how Zambian stakeholders negotiate the power its development cooperation providers have to introduce external development interventions through TDC. It also explores how domestic political and bureaucratic challenges constrain the retention of development knowledge, the sustainability of development outcomes from TDC projects, and the wider implications for development effectiveness in Zambia. The chapter also supports this study's commitment to amplifying marginalised voices in global discourses by highlighting beneficiary partner suggestions on how institutions can navigate and enhance TDC partnerships.

Chapter Seven reviews and synthesizes the overall research findings on how country ownership and sustainable development outcomes in TDC are affected by the complex politics of partnership. It examines the wider implications of the research findings on

debates concerning the changing geographies of global power and development, offers policy recommendations for improving development effectiveness, and directions for future conceptual and methodological studies on South-South/trilateral development cooperation.

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Country ownership: Power, Knowledge and Self-reliance in Development

The concept of country ownership is widely associated with the aid effectiveness debates leading up to the 2005 Paris High-level Forum, where it was defined as a situation in which “partner countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies, and strategies and coordinate development actions” (OECD 2005). This chapter sets out to establish the historical importance of country ownership in international development cooperation by exploring some of the ways that post-colonial countries have either consented to externally driven interventions to spur economic growth or contested them to protect their sovereignty through mechanisms such as South-South cooperation. It also aims to show how a postcolonial approach might be brought to bear on the analysis of beneficiary country ownership of trilateral development cooperation (TDC) and outlines the conceptual framework informing the research. This is not an easy task given as McEwan (2019, p.99) points out, postcolonial and development studies have not always engaged with each other due to “differences in disciplinary traditions, politics, wariness of motives and the language and concepts used to articulate core issues.” Despite this, the chapter argues that these divergences also offer opportunities to explore alternative understandings of development. Postcolonial approaches have enabled researchers to understand how the structural inequality that colonialism created in the global political economy shapes contemporary power relations, how the dominance of Northern knowledge frameworks has silenced alternative development knowledge from the global South, the acts of resistance to this dominance and the benefits of recovering marginalised voices. This chapter draws on these postcolonial perspectives on development in order to problematize the TDC partnership process and underscore the rationale for making the beneficiary country the focal point of this thesis, as opposed to the current trend in academic and policy research where the views and concerns of development cooperation providers are given precedence.

The chapter demonstrates that development cooperation is political in nature through first discussing how South-South cooperation (SSC) emerged in the 20th century as a response to concerns that Northern countries were concealing geopolitical motivations behind their technical cooperation and competing theories on industrial modernity. In this sense, South-South technical cooperation was originally conceptualized as a modality for developing countries to successively achieve economic growth, self-reliance and total control over their development trajectory. The chapter proceeds to argue that this conception of technical cooperation amongst developing countries is being challenged in contemporary South-South/trilateral cooperation through the reproduction of mimicry, trusteeship and assumptions about who is the knower-learner in development, which are practices that have historically been a part of North-South cooperation. It also examines the implications of these practices on country ownership and considers the role of TDC in the domestication of development knowledge (that is innovative policies, programmes and technologies) from influential Southern countries and global frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Finally, the chapter explores debates about African agency to gain insight into how beneficiary countries are responding to the changing geographies of power and development. Through this discussion, it argues that the ongoing changes require postcolonial scholars to extend core arguments concerning the relationship between power and knowledge production, beyond their focus on the dominance of Northern cooperation providers to the rise of Southern ‘authorities’ on development knowledge.

South-South cooperation for economic development and self-reliance

The origins of international development cooperation are often associated with the success of the United States in facilitating the economic recovery and expansion of war-torn European countries after the end of World War II through the Marshall Plan. As Farias (2018) points out, the success of the Marshall Plan generated the widespread

belief that a combination of high rates of financial investments and technical assistance could quickly generate economic growth, and as a result, post-colonial governments in Africa, Asia and Latin America began to appeal for similar forms of economic assistance. In what is considered a foundational doctrine of North-South cooperation, in 1949 US President Harry S. Truman made a commitment in the Point Four program to alleviate poverty in these countries which he labelled as ‘underdeveloped’ through transfers of finances, technology and technical know-how (Paterson 1972). The United Nations (UN) and the World Bank expanded their mandate from post-war reconstruction to promoting development in the global South; the United States, its European allies and Japan also established bilateral aid agencies to facilitate this support; and the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) was established in 1961 to coordinate their development cooperation activities. Through these processes, the terms ‘development’ and ‘development cooperation’ became the normal concepts to describe the diverse challenges found in the global South, and the means for rich countries to introduce technical solutions for enhancing progress and improved well-being in the poorest countries (Rist 2002; Farias 2018).

Initially, technical cooperation (or technical assistance as it was widely referred to) was the focus of most bilateral development cooperation programmes and mostly involved training programmes to ensure the transfer of skills or technologies to the beneficiary country and the placement of Northern technical experts in institutions where local capacity was lacking (Ekoko and Benn 2002). Early forms of technical cooperation were motivated by altruistic reasons such as promoting literacy, immunisation against infectious diseases or encouraging environmentally-friendly agricultural practices. Lancaster (2007, p.29) argues that countries such as the United Kingdom and France also used technical cooperation to support a smooth transition to post-colonial governments so that they could disconnect from their former colonies with as little damage as possible to their international reputation. However, as the Cold War began to intensify in the 1960s, technical cooperation evolved into a political tool for the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) to expand their soft power influence and disseminate their competing philosophies on economic development. This was in spite of an agreement in a 1948 UN General Assembly

resolution that technical cooperation “shall not be used as a means of economic and political interference in the affairs of another country” (Farias 2018, p.55). As Power (2019) explains, intellectuals such as Walt Rostow helped the US government to establish aid programmes that promoted the notion that beneficiary countries could transform in a linear fashion, from having traditional agricultural-based societies to modern industrialised societies. The theories developed under what is known as the modernisation school of thought promoted a capitalist vision of development that laid emphasis on urbanisation, technological advancement, and the import-export of consumer goods and services through the free market, whereas the Soviet socialist model of industrial modernity promoted state-led central planning, market controls and collective agriculture.

The modernisation school of thought has faced extensive criticism in postcolonial studies for encouraging the global South to mimic the historical trajectory of Western countries in order to become ‘developed’, similar to how colonial education embedded the notion that colonial subjects had to mimic European cultural practices in order to be considered ‘civilised’ (Fanon 1986; Bhabha 2004). The categorisation of numerous countries as ‘least developed’ in World Bank and UN reports based on economic measures such as gross national income (GNI) has also been criticised for discounting what individual countries considered as progress or well-being and for erasing the significance of any economic activity that they engaged in outside the global capitalist economic framework (Ferguson 1994; Escobar 1995). However, modernisation was such an influential ideology that political and intellectual elites in the global South actively pursued diverse strategies aimed at achieving Western-style modernity in an effort to distance themselves from the notion of being ‘underdeveloped’ (see Mudimbe 1988; Shrestha 1995). Within this context, technical experts from the ‘developed’ global North were perceived as possessing the secrets to industrial modernity and were thus highly sought after by developing countries. Developing countries also began to explore the potential for South-South exchanges to facilitate economic growth when, as Paterson (1972) points out, it became clear that a large percentage of Northern technical cooperation was being used to advance the geopolitical and economic interests of donors rather than to enhance their development. Subsequently, the

political leaders of developing countries agreed at keystone events, such as the 1955 Bandung Asia-Africa conference, to strengthen their political and economic ties in order to address the socio-economic inequalities that had come out of the colonial era and to assert their sovereignty in global governance structures (Haq 1980).

This form of solidarity which became known as South-South cooperation (SSC) went beyond the Northern approach of development cooperation by explicitly integrating political, economic and development cooperation activities. Political cooperation was aimed at fostering transnational anti-colonial, anti-imperialist and anti-racist solidarity movements, but became centred on the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961, which was a space for countries to navigate the ideological tension between the United States and the Soviet Union (see Prashad 2008). Economic cooperation involved the promotion of intra-South trade and investments, and also the coordinated campaign to demand for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) to govern international trade through the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (Haq 1980). Countries such as China, Kuwait, Libya, India, Brazil and Nigeria also provided other developing countries with concessional loans for large infrastructure development projects, although the purpose of this financial assistance was less about economic solidarity and more about strategically building diplomatic support to resolve regional conflicts (Lancaster 2007). Then, in the 1970s, technical cooperation amongst developing countries (TCDC) became the focal point of SSC and the main modality for achieving its broader goals. As discussed in Chapter One, TCDC was largely advanced in UN forums and specifically through the financial support of agencies such as the Group of 77 (G77) and the UN Special Unit for Technical Cooperation Amongst Developing Countries (now known as UNOSSC). The interest in TCDC was to a large extent a reflection of the prioritisation of education, science and technological advancements in both the Western capitalist and socialist economic models that had influenced development thinking (Rist 2002). In addition, TCDC was also aimed at encouraging developing countries to generate internal solutions, as an act of resistance against the tendency for Western approaches to encourage mimicry and universalism in their dissemination of development knowledge and technology, with little regard for contextual differences (Matthews 1987). Most post-colonial

countries were also looking to diversify their sources of technical cooperation in order to end their dependence on expensive Northern expertise, which was considered a form of neo-colonialism (Boye and Mennasemay 1988), and to tackle the human and institutional capacity gaps in their bureaucracies and industries that led to this dependency.

This line of thinking on capacity development and self-reliance was heavily influenced by the dependency school of thought which emerged as a critique to modernisation theory in the late 1960s. Dependency theorists such as Andre Gunder Frank, Walter Rodney and Samir Amin generally argued that underdevelopment in the global South was not a result of these countries merely lagging behind on a linear path to industrial modernity as it is alleged in modernisation theories, but rather a result of the exploitative relationship between the global North and global South, which they described as a core-periphery bond. Dependency theorists contended that periphery countries were incorporated into the global capitalist economic system as sources of minerals, agricultural commodities, and labour during the colonial era; and as a result, they relied on the core for manufactured goods, technologies, specialist skills and services. They also argued that the dominant core was not committed to addressing this inequality because it still disproportionately benefitted from this economic order and its longstanding political and intellectual linkages with the subordinate periphery. Theorists such as Samir Amin argued that each developing country, therefore, has to 'delink' from the core and rely on South-South cooperation (SSC) and other internally driven solutions in order to foster economic growth and self-reliance (Amin 1990). As Rist (2002, p.135) points out, proponents of dependency theory generally assumed that self-reliance would reduce the challenges developing countries experienced from not having full control over their economies, promote horizontal solidarity, end the core-periphery dynamic and transform the periphery into a multitude of 'centres' dependent on no one.

Despite the popularity of these assumptions of self-reliance, early observers such as Mahbub ul Haq were quick to question if SSC was just another passing fad or a new trend, mirroring long-term realities:

Is this [SSC] just a by-product of the current disillusionment with the North? Is it merely a romantic notion, based on an 'idealised' South that does not exist? Or is there far more to it? Does it finally represent an effort by the South to delink (however partially) their economic growth from the North and to get organised for collective bargaining in international forums? Are we witnessing here a fundamental break from the patterns of past development and a serious search for alternative development styles? (ul Haq 1980, p.139)

ul Haq acknowledged that outright rejection of foreign goods, technology or value systems could not support self-reliance and instead suggested that developing countries should undergo a process of 'intellectual liberation' that would enable them to accept external values that align with local needs and avoid problems of engaging in 'slavish imitation' (ul Haq 1980, p.149). He also went on to argue that developing countries were reliant on networks provided by Northern-based organisations to promote SSC and that this would continue to act as a hindrance to their long-term ability to achieve their goals, unless they organised and financed most activities themselves. This was a reasonable warning given most developing countries had begun to struggle after the 1970s oil crisis, which triggered fluctuations in the global price of commodities and a global economic recession, but it is not clear what efforts, if any, were made by developing countries to transform SSC into a self-financed mechanism.

As Farias (2018, p.87) notes, South-South economic and political cooperation began to decline from the mid-1980s as the priorities of most developing countries shifted from striving for economic self-reliance to securing economic stabilization loans from Northern financial institutions, whose economies fared much better during the global recession. The end of the Cold War also made delinking from the global North undesirable as more countries embraced the new drive for economic globalization in the 1990s and shifted their development strategies from a socialist state-led model to the Washington Consensus neoliberal free-market based approach. Small flows of South-South technical cooperation kept 'the spirit of Bandung' alive during this period, but there is very little scholarly literature to provide critical analysis of the

activities that took place. According to Ekoko and Benn (2002), numerous regional organisations and networks within the United Nations systems were established to promote capacity development and the exchange of policy experiences in areas such as trade, food security, disaster preparedness and public health management. Trilateral development cooperation (TDC) emerged subsequently as a complementary modality through which Northern donors could formally support the South-South technical cooperation. For example, Japan began to facilitate Asia-Africa exchanges after the 1st Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 1993. Therefore, although the birth of SSC lies in political processes concerning decolonisation and the Cold War, the origins of TDC lie in efforts to strengthen the use of Southern knowledge during a decade in which Northern institutions, practices and policies dominated the global development architecture. As discussed in the next section, this makes country ownership of TDC a concept ripe for analysis through a postcolonial lens.

Power and knowledge in development cooperation

Critics of aid have pointed out how aid dependency constrains the space for sovereignty or autonomy, especially in how it created space for donor paternalism and interference in the national planning of beneficiary countries when many countries were facing economic turmoil in the 1980s and 1990s (Kayizzi-Mugerwa 1998; Brautigam and Botchwey 1999; Mkandawire and Soludo 1999). However, postcolonial scholars have also illustrated the ways in which donor paternalism in the production and dissemination of development knowledge reproduces practices from colonial governance that infantilised colonised peoples (e.g. Slater and Bell 2002; Mercer *et al.* 2003; Baaz 2005; Noxolo 2006). Three critiques from these debates are relevant for understanding country ownership and the nature of partnerships in contemporary TDC. First, Northern donors led by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank reproduced the colonial tradition of encouraging developing countries to mimic Western modernity by tying their financial assistance to the

Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which consisted of a set of neoliberal economic reforms that had already been implemented in developed economies. Second, the discourse in development continued to promote the notion that the global North is the ‘knower’ and the global South is the ‘learner’ in development. Third, donor agencies replicated the colonial practice of ‘trusteeship’, which Cowen and Shenton (1996, p.x) define as “the intent which is expressed, by one source of agency, to develop the capacities of another,” through their extensive interference in the national development planning of their beneficiary countries.

Postcolonial theory has enabled researchers to bring to light the continuities and discontinuities in North-South relations from colonial times to the present day. One of its key contributions to the study of international development has been to demonstrate how knowledge is a form of power, which gives actors that are perceived to possess knowledge on how modernity can be achieved significant authority to define and influence the trajectory of those actors that are in the position of receiving their knowledge (McEwan 2019). Specific attention has been drawn to how the extensive knowledge production systems in the global North have strengthened its authority to diagnose and theorise which technical interventions (that is policies, programmes or projects) will stimulate development in beneficiary countries (Crush 1995). Postcolonial critiques of development have drawn on Edward Said’s (1978) *Orientalism* to explore how these practices are rooted in colonial discourses that constructed the Western Self as ‘enlightened’ and the bearer of knowledge on how modernity could be achieved, and Other societies as child-like and thus in need of tutelage. As McEwan (2019, p.153) points out, this practice of ‘othering’ in colonial discourse legitimised colonial intervention and cemented divisions between the West and the rest of the world:

Parts of the world were discursively produced as the West’s inferior other, which in turn constructed and reinforced the self-image of the West as superior. The two were discursively locked together as each other’s opposite – the Other was irrational, sensual, backward, feminized and despotic; the West was rational, progressive, dynamic, masculine and democratic.

Postcolonial scholars have shown that development discourses have been key to reinforcing these notions in post-colonial times by attributing underdevelopment to the deficiencies in the socio-cultural and political context of global South, while solutions are seen as emerging from practices found in global North. During the era of SAP, reports from the World Bank were especially powerful in constructing underdevelopment in the global South as being a result of poor state capacity to engage in effective policymaking, hence rationalising its rolling back (see World Bank 1989a; World Bank 1989b). These reports often presented Northern policies, which favoured the rule of free markets and economic globalisation, as the solutions to economic growth and poverty reduction. These views contrasted sharply to those previously discussed of dependency theory, which viewed underdevelopment as a product of the structural issues rooted in the integration of developing countries into the global capitalist economy as commodity exporters during the colonial era, and that persisted in the present largely because of Cold War geopolitics.

Dominant discourses in development also promoted the notion that neoliberal prescriptions were universal and the assumption that ‘what is best for the West is best for everyone else’. This naturally generated criticism for failing to recognise the heterogeneity of developing countries, and the importance of taking into account differences in their socio-economic and political contexts. However, Simon (2005) argues that homogenisation was the explicit goal of Northern aid and investment programmes, based on Orientalist assumptions that the ‘culture’ of developing countries was an obstacle to development to be overcome through aid and investment programmes. The reduction of economic challenges in developing countries to deficiencies in the local culture instead of deficiencies in Western models of modernity, was especially prominent in discourses on African development. As Andreasson (2005, p.975) points out, the notion that an inability to properly harness Western notions of law, free market and good governance was intrinsic to African culture was especially powerful in justifying the need for African countries to adopt externally generated development solutions. Echoing events that occurred during decolonisation, many developing countries internalised these views and opened

themselves up to Northern technical cooperation in order to facilitate neoliberal and democratic reforms.

Mkandawire and Soludo (1999, p.36) note that Northern technical experts dominated bureaucratic agencies in beneficiary countries and in some cases they excluded local civil servants from the design, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes. Northern donor agencies also tended to 'ask' what were the main development challenges and 'answer' the questions themselves, by channelling financial aid to sectors they believed could facilitate sustainable development (Lancaster 2007). Some countries, such as Zambia, attempted to resist policies that did not align with their local context and pursue internal solutions. However, Northern donors harmonised their activities to enable the withdrawal and release of financial assistance through which to coerce beneficiary countries to adhere to SAP reforms or additional values such as democracy, human rights protection, judicial reform and environmental conservation (Whitfield 2009). It is important to recognise that these actions essentially took 'ownership' of development away from the governments of beneficiary countries and gradually weakened their institutional and human resources capacity to engage in strategic planning. However, as Crewe and Harrison's (1998, p.76) ethnography of the aid industry in South Asia and Africa found, when beneficiaries made arguments for greater ownership of development programmes, Northern technical experts would reject these ideas with belittling remarks such as 'they are not ready to take charge yet', 'they couldn't organise a picnic let alone a development project' or suggest that they lacked the capacity to manage project funds.

The concept of 'trusteeship' is useful for understanding how this paternalistic approach to North-South development cooperation is also rooted in colonial governance. Cowen and Shenton (1996) trace the origins of trusteeship to a set of remedies that Enlightenment philosophers came up with to manage the disorder that the transition from feudalism to capitalism created in European societies. For example, arguments were made for the responsibility for land, labour and capital resources to be placed in the hands of trustees who had the 'capacity' to manage them in the interests of society as a whole, such as bankers to manage capital, instead of allowing

these resources to be managed by ‘idle and isolated individuals’ (Cowen and Shenton 1996, p.28). This sense of trusteeship was later reproduced by colonial administrations and missionaries in their quest to help colonised peoples to become modern and civilised, based on Orientalist assumptions that they were child-like, inexperienced and therefore, in need of constant supervision (Mercer *et al.* 2003). As Power (2019, p.27) points out, administrations were also motivated by a desire to maximise the economic benefits accrued from their colonies in the late stages of colonialism. For example, the British government administered grants for sanitation, education, housing and infrastructure to its colonies in the 1930s, to improve living standards for its subjects and also produce a more pacified, efficient and healthier labour force. Then, as progress became attached to the notion of ‘development’ after decolonisation, politicians, donor agencies, non-governmental organisations and all sorts of technical experts involved in international development continued to subtly embody a sense of trusteeship, not with the objective of dominating the beneficiaries of their development programmes, but to direct and enhance their capacity to attain progress or modernity (Li 2007).

The legitimacy of this Northern trusteeship and knowledge frameworks was not effectively challenged for several decades (even with the initial emergence of SSC at Bandung) until overwhelming evidence began to emerge in the mid-1990s that SAPs had exacerbated the economic problems in many African countries (for examples, see Mkandawire and Soludo 1999). However, as Li’s (2007, p.282) study of World Bank projects in Indonesia found, trustees tend to look for new ways to reassert the authority of their knowledge when development programmes face critical scrutiny, when expertise is challenged, and when the boundary dividing technical experts and their beneficiaries is crossed. For Northern donors, this strategy involved the introduction of the rhetoric of ‘partnership’ and ‘country ownership.’ This was in response to criticisms that their relationship with beneficiary countries was paternalistic and their interference in the national planning of beneficiary countries through policy conditionalities had failed to stimulate economic growth because they did not understand local needs and context (Crewe and Harrison 1998). Subsequently, country ownership became the focal point of the aid effectiveness agenda, with emphasis on

putting the beneficiaries in control of shaping and assessing development interventions so as to increase their responsiveness to local needs and realities (World Bank 1995). As part of efforts to support country ownership, Northern donors allowed their beneficiary partners to increase the role of the state in development planning. In the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness Northern donors also committed themselves to “respecting beneficiary country leadership and helping to strengthen their capacity to exercise it”⁵ (OECD 2005).

In spite of these commitments, conflicting approaches to country ownership emerged in development practice. For example, Fraser and Whitfield (2009) found that developing countries equated ownership with control over the policymaking process and outcomes, but the World Bank, IMF and bilateral agencies interpreted it as a commitment to agreed policy reforms and thus continued to use the release and withdrawal of development cooperation to influence beneficiaries on matters such as good governance. This validated arguments that the talk of partnerships in the aid effectiveness agenda could not alter the reality that “the relationship between donors and beneficiaries is inherently unequal and at times coercive” (Crewe and Harrison 1998, p.74). It also led critics such as Samir Amin to argue that the practices in North-South cooperation were still ‘neo-colonial’ and that developing countries should intensify their commitment to South-South cooperation in order to counter the power of Northern agencies (Amin 2009). Amin was of the view that policy conditionalities and the harmonisation of donor programmes continued to reinforce the power that Northern agencies had to ensure that beneficiary countries aligned their policymaking to the Washington Consensus (Amin 2009, p.61).

⁵ The other aid effectiveness commitments in the PD are: *alignment*- donors will align support to beneficiary strategies and institutions; *harmonisation*- donors co-ordinate their activities, simplify and share information; *managing for results*- partners focus on achieving results and use information to improve decision-making; and *mutual accountability*- partners are accountable for development results. The international community has continued to promote the implementation of these principles post-2015 in the GPEDC as a part of efforts to ensure that all forms of development cooperation are effective, with renewed emphasis on country ownership, inclusive partnerships, and the need to obtain observable and sustainable results.

In recent years, some proponents of the decolonization of knowledge production have used the concept of the ‘coloniality of power’ to describe the authority the World Bank, IMF and other Northern institutions have had to instruct policymaking in developing countries (Mignolo 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015). It is important to distinguish that coloniality and colonialism are two different concepts. As Maldonado-Torres (2007, p.243) points out:

Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such a nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects, we breathe coloniality all the time and every day.

In development partnerships, coloniality can be seen in studies such as Baaz’s (2005) ethnography on Nordic development projects in Tanzania, which found that Northern technical experts continued to approach development projects as if they were a vehicle for galvanising the passive lazy Other into becoming like the rational hardworking Self, and could not imagine that they had anything to learn from beneficiary partners. In knowledge production, coloniality can also be seen in how researchers have observed that the discourse in development texts has continued to reinforce notions that the global North is endowed with the intellectual and technical resources needed to achieve development (Goldman 2005; Narayanaswamy 2013). This is in spite of calls for the ‘provincialization’ of Northern development frameworks and longstanding arguments about the need to recognise that people in the global South are capable of articulating their own development needs and generating relevant solutions (Escobar 1995; Briggs and Sharp 2004).

In a reflection on his experience of working on World Bank literacy projects in Senegal, Bjorn Nordtveit (2009) argues that many development practitioners and academics have normalised these knowledge hierarchies by using indicators from Northern knowledge frameworks to assess how much technical interventions (such as primary education or adult literacy programmes) have ‘cured’ or modernised the ‘backward’ beneficiaries. He argues that development practitioners seldom question the ideologies underpinning these interventions, the discourse constructing their vision of development, how this vision may differ from those of the beneficiary, and the power structures governing this relationship (Nordtveit 2009, p.xvi). These knowledge hierarchies were extensively embedded in development thinking and practice to the extent that observers such as Goldman (2005, p.vii) argued that it was “hard to imagine the world except through the lens of World Bank-style development models.” However, the strength of the ‘coloniality of power’ slowly began to disintegrate when sustained economic growth propelled China, India, and Brazil’s to expand their volumes of economic and development cooperation between 2000 and 2010, signalling the resurgence of SSC and offering developing countries alternative models of industrial modernity (Mawdsley 2012).

Non-interference and non-conditionality in development cooperation

Central to the concept of country ownership is the notion that the beneficiary country should have the freedom to articulate its vision of development and that partner countries should only introduce development interventions that align with the beneficiary’s vision (OECD 2005). As discussed in Chapter One, over the last decade this vision for many developing countries has returned to increasing their national income and source of development finances from trade and investment, with the overall goal of attaining self-reliance and control of their development trajectory. It is for this reason that many developing countries initially embraced, without much reservation, the plurality of modalities and non-conditionality offered by China, India, and Brazil because it aligned with their plans. The lack of policy conditionalities in

their development cooperation was due to the SSC principle of non-interference in the affairs of other countries, which originated at 1955 Bandung conference. Many beneficiary governments praised the reinvigorated SSC for expanding their space to take ownership of development and on occasion, several governments opted to take up loans from their influential Southern partners instead of the stringent loans offered by Northern donors such as the IMF⁶ (Power *et al.* 2012; Dornan and Brant 2014). The influence of the most powerful Southern cooperation providers was further expanded through their membership of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) grouping and their establishment of multilateral institutions such as the New Development Bank (NDB), at a time when many Northern economies were facing decline following the 2008–9 global financial crisis. These developments led scholars such as Mignolo (2012) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2019) to hail the rise of the BRICS as a counter-hegemonic challenge to the dominance of the global North that continues “the Bandung spirit of decolonization.”

Mignolo (2012) argues that the rise of the BRICS has created an opportunity for the global South to delink from the ‘coloniality of power’ that established Western capitalism, industrial modernity and democratic governance as the appropriate way of knowing and living between 1500 and 2000, by building alternative frameworks that supersede it. Mignolo uses the term ‘dewesternization’ to describe this process that the BRICS have triggered in the realm of knowledge production. In a further exploration of these ideas, Mignolo (2018, p.99) uses the metaphor of a puppeteer to depict the Northern governments and institutions that have the power to influence ‘what is enunciated’ and the language in which it is maintained; and puppets to represent ‘the content of the conversation’ as well as the designs the puppeteer creates to captivate its audience. Mignolo does not idealize the BRICS and notes that they are mainly advancing dewesternization in order to wrangle control of the contents of the conversation. Mignolo (2018, p.103) also notes that dewesternization does not imply that the BRICS have completely rejected Western forms such as capitalism. Instead,

⁶ This is in spite of the fact that development projects are often tied to the procurement of resources from Southern partners.

the BRICS have appropriated Western forms, used them to develop their economies and to acquire the wealth, military strength and soft power influence necessary to disrupt the Western-dominated world order. Mignolo (2018, p.105) acknowledges that dewesternization creates the space for decolonization and decoloniality, which is a process advocated by diverse social actors (including academics, journalists, activists and artists) in order to delink or alter the predominately Western principles and assumptions that have so far determined the production and dissemination of knowledge. However, Mignolo goes on to contend that some Northern governments and institutions are employing discourses that vilify and construct the BRICS as dangerous with the aim of re-establishing the legitimacy of Western knowledge systems to other countries, and thus where knowledge is articulated. He specifically, cites speeches from Barack Obama touting a ‘New American Century’ and Donald Trump’s ‘Make America Great Again’ rhetoric, as examples of how the United States is leading Northern governments towards ‘rewesternizing’ political and economic spaces.⁷

The efforts to rewesternize the ways of knowing and living can also be applied to the debates concerning the appropriate method for delivering development cooperation. These debates initially began as evidence emerged indicating that non-conditionality and non-interference in SSC enabled some beneficiary governments to secure financial assistance for ‘prestige’ projects such as sports stadiums with no obvious developmental benefits to their countries (Manning 2006; Woods 2008; Chandy and Kharas 2011; Sidiropoulos *et al.* 2015). However, a strong ‘good donor’ versus ‘bad donor’ binary also emerged in the initial texts published on ‘the rise of the South’ in Northern academic and policy circles, especially those analysing the activities of China, India and Brazil. The Northern Self was often characterised as the good donor for adhering to the OECD-DAC standards which were presented as ‘traditional’ and universal, while the Southern Others were presented as the new ‘rogue’ donors who posed a great risk to ‘vulnerable’ developing countries (Naim 2007 is an example of

⁷ For example, see Obama, B. (2012) “Remarks at the Air Force Academy Commencement,” Colorado Springs, Colorado, 23 May 2012, available: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2012/05/23/remarks-president-air-force-academy-commencement>

the most extreme critic). Moderate analysts such as Mawdsley (2012) and Park (2011) were able to point out that Southern cooperation providers were just as concerned with aid effectiveness as the rest of the international community, but operationalised the principles in a manner that matched their own history of state-led development. With regards to country ownership, Park (2011, p.53) points out, that Southern development cooperation providers equated country ownership with the idea that development interventions should be demand-driven by senior government officials from the beneficiary country. This in contrast to what he describes as the managerial approach favoured by Northern cooperation providers where development programmes and transparency/accountability monitoring frameworks are devised from priorities outlined in the beneficiary country's national development plans. The international community eventually agreed on a compromise on these different understandings of country ownership and debates about SSC in the 2011 Busan Declaration on Effective Development Cooperation. It was emphasised that "we now all form an integral part of a new and more inclusive development agenda, in which Southern actors participate based on common goals, shared principles and differential commitments" (OECD 2011).

In spite of commitments at Busan, some Northern discourses have continued to characterise concessional loans, trade and investments from influential Southern countries as predatory or deficient. This includes recent analysis of the concessional loans provided under China's Belt and Road Initiative, which some observers have equated to a 21st century version of the Marshall Plan, but others have labelled as tantamount to colonialism⁸ (e.g. Bolton 2018; Kleven 2019). Of course, Southern cooperation providers are not a monolithic group. As Mawdsley (2017) notes, academic and policy circles have extended their gaze to the development cooperation activities of a 'second-tier' of Southern partners that includes South Korea, South Africa, Indonesia, Malaysia, Chile, Colombia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. However, it is interesting to note that Northern discourses on the activities of some

⁸ The Chinese government adopted the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013 as a strategy to expand infrastructure development and its investments in countries across the Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America, see <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/brief/belt-and-road-initiative>

these second-tier countries that employ SSC principles such as non-interference or mutually beneficial relations, but also participate in OECD-DAC forums or reporting processes, have not been as critical. For example, the OECD's review of South Korea's development cooperation has described it as 'exemplary' and 'innovative' (OECD 2018). This contradiction points to how language is central to power, both through 'the act of naming,' which enables one culture or group to make another seem deficient or inferior, and 'the act of leaving unnamed' which enables it to construct its practices as superior (Schech and Haggis 2000).

It also points to how Homi Bhabha's views on the 'ambivalence' in colonial discourse are also relevant to the debates on the governance of international development cooperation. In *The Location of Culture* Bhabha argues that the dominant power's desire for mimicry is aimed at producing a "reformed recognisable other that is almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha 2004, p.122). He goes on to state that mimicry in colonial discourse must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference... in order for the dominant power to gain authority, but this difference simultaneously acts as a sign of the resistance of the colonised to this power. In the same vein, the minor differences in how second-tier Southern countries deliver development cooperation, such as their observance of non-interference, acts both as a form of resistance to Northern hegemony and a way for them to stand out from traditional members of the OECD-DAC. This deviance also creates grounds for Northern countries to justify the need for their continued trusteeship of the global development architecture in a post-global financial crisis world, where as Sidiropoulos *et al.* (2015) point out, the appropriateness and effectiveness of Northern development solutions are increasingly questioned. However, in the midst of the contested development landscape discussed above, South-South technical cooperation has received wide support and acceptance from the international development community. As the next section shows, this is largely a result of the long-held assumptions that similarities in geography, culture and political histories make Southern development knowledge (policies, programmes and technologies) suitable for replication in developing countries (Rhee 2011).

Whose vision? South-South knowledge transfers and global policy trends

Postcolonial approaches emphasise the importance of acknowledging that there are diverse perspectives on what are the most important development needs or problems and the type of intervention that can be employed to address these needs (McEwan 2019). What is significant is that when compared to critical analyses of Northern technical cooperation, ongoing analyses of South-South technical cooperation are not adequately addressing concerns about the heterogeneity of the global South and the appropriateness of technology and knowledge transfers. Instead the promotion of what Shankland and Goncalves (2016) describe as the ‘imaginary of similarities’ between developing countries is supporting the universalisation of policy solutions and technologies that may not be suitable for beneficiary countries, in the same manner, that Western development models have done in the past. The prominence of discourses on ‘horizontality’ and ‘plurality’ in SSC have also reinforced the legitimacy of Southern development knowledge and promoted the notion that developing countries are equal and that every country, even the most fragile and low-income country, has unique development experiences or policy successes that it can share with others (Chaturvedi 2018).

Development knowledge from middle-income countries is considered particularly valuable, given that these countries have been able to industrialise and improve human development while still grappling with the serious challenges found in other developing countries, such as bureaucratic inefficiencies, problematic infrastructure and large-scale poverty (Farias 2018, p.83). However, some Southern development cooperation providers have shown that they are specifically using the imaginary of similarities to promote development models that remain their domestic policy priorities. For example, Chinese and Brazilian technical cooperation in agriculture to African countries is focused primarily on the replication of agribusiness models and technologies that fuelled their own domestic development, but these have been found to be unsuitable for adaptation to African contexts and/or do not fit into the beneficiaries’ idea of what agricultural development should look like (Scoones *et al.*

2016). This suggests that postcolonial critiques of the desire of the dominant power for mimicry, is also becoming evident in the actions of these Southern cooperation providers and has potential to constrain the ability of beneficiary countries to have total control of their development trajectory.

Recent studies (e.g. Chichava *et al.* 2013; Cabral *et al.* 2016; Taela 2017) have also shown that assumptions that SSC is more respectful and encourages mutual learning between partners are not entirely accurate, given that some Southern technical experts have also been found to exhibit elements of trusteeship and reproduce the modern-backwards/knower-learner framework that has been pervasive in the North-South relations. In their study of agricultural projects in Mozambique, Chichava *et al.* (2013, p.24) observed that Chinese and Brazilian narratives on technical cooperation in agriculture tended to be self-affirming and suggested they had plenty to teach but little to learn from their Mozambican partners. Although it was noted that they happily acknowledged learning from Japanese and American partners in the past. It is not clear if racialization played a role in how these technical experts perceived their Mozambican partners, given that studies such as those by Wilson (2012) and Pailey (2019) have shown that racism is embedded in development cooperation. However, the presence of such knowledge hierarchies in SSC suggests that possession of development knowledge is a strong causative factor of donor paternalism in development partnerships, even in cases where the donor and beneficiary country do not share a direct colonial history. In spite of the challenges posed by these issues to country ownership, the international community (especially Northern cooperation providers) has continued to scale-up efforts to facilitate the transfer of Southern development knowledge and technologies through trilateral development cooperation (TDC). It is necessary, therefore, to scrutinise the flow of knowledge and power relations in TDC projects in order to fully understand the experiences of beneficiary countries.

Problematizing ownership in TDC

The international development community is constructing TDC as a form of development cooperation that supports inclusive beneficiary country-owned interventions (i.e. projects, programmes and policies) and equality between all partners. For example, paragraph 28 in the 2019 Buenos Aires Plan of Action (also known as BAPA+40) describes TDC as a modality that builds partnerships and trust between all partners and combines diverse resources and capacities under the *ownership* of the requesting developing country to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁹ It also states that the *inclusive* and diverse nature of TDC supports partnerships where each partner can contribute according to its own capacities and means, and calls for member states to increase their use of TDC in order to support the mobilization of additional resources, knowledge and expertise under the *leadership* of the beneficiary country (UN 2019). It is not clear from studies to date whether TDC partnerships are in reality affording beneficiary countries greater ownership of development interventions. However, Southern development cooperation providers appear to have opened up to employing this discourse on inclusive, country-owned and country-led TDC partnerships, which is rooted in the OECD-led development effectiveness agenda that emerged from Busan, in order to signal that they are not rogue predators and can act in accordance with international best practice (Fingermann 2015; Zhang 2017).

This discourse is enabling Northern partners to position TDC as a response to past debates on the paternalism in their bilateral cooperation and to re-establish their legitimacy as development partners following questions on the effectiveness of their development solutions. TDC is also enabling Northern countries to sensitize Southern development cooperation providers on OECD-DAC best practice as was suggested by early policy studies (e.g. Fordelone 2009; Ashoff 2010), and in so doing, continue their role as trustees of the global development architecture. Overall, it could even be argued that the promotion of TDC is another strategy to which Northern governments

⁹ The BAPA+40 document is the outcome of the 2nd High-level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation.

and institutions are increasingly turning to in order to manage the dewesternization of international development, by influencing what forms of development knowledge flow South to South and which Southern countries are the sources of development knowledge. At present, the most active and sought after pivotal partners have been emerging powers such as Brazil, China, India, South Africa, Colombia, Chile, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia (OECD 2017; UNDP 2017a). Mexico and Turkey have also mobilised the discourse of SSC in their foreign relations with developing countries and become pivotal partners in TDC, even though both countries have not traditionally been involved in SSC (Mawdsley 2018). This problematizes geographical imaginations of which countries constitute 'the global South.' Nevertheless, what is significant is that the majority of TDC initiatives implemented in African countries involve the flow of knowledge and technologies from pivotal countries in Asia and Latin America to African beneficiaries but not the other way round, although there have been some cases of South-South/trilateral cooperation projects involving inter-Africa exchanges (see UNDP 2017a; UNOSSC 2018).

The one-sided movement of knowledge indicates that Africa is being treated as the site for development interventions but not as a source of development knowledge, and suggests that South-South/trilateral cooperation is not 'transcending divides' by allowing diverse countries to share their development experiences, as it has been claimed in policy literatures (e.g. OECD 2017). It also suggests that TDC is not promoting valuable technologies and development knowledge that are generated from African countries, but is perpetuating the continent's history of being dominated by external ideas. The marginalisation of African voices undermines their agency and contributes to their 'subalternity' in international development. This use of the term subaltern in this research is not related to the study of how the agency of marginalised groups (such as women and peasants) in the global South has been undermined by colonial powers and local elites, through their exclusion from dominant debates (see Spivak 1988). It is based on the military definition of the term which refers to someone of a lower status, but focuses on relations at the scale of the state. It specifically draws on Joanne Sharp's interpretation of 'the subaltern in geopolitics' which emphasises that the subaltern is not 'the other' that is outside the ranks and fighting with dominant

states, but rather a state at a lower rank in the hierarchy of global power (Sharp 2013, p.22). Sharp argues that Northern discourses on international relations tend to focus on the narratives and concerns of dominant states which has led the universalisation of their values and silenced alternative views. However, through a discussion of former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere's vision on Pan-Africanism and the Non-Aligned Movement, Sharp (2013) demonstrates how a deeper understanding of the numerous ways in which global politics is made and remade can be obtained when the perspectives of subaltern states are heard and treated as important. For example, Nyerere encouraged African leaders to use nationalism to build internal unity and minimise the opportunities for richer countries to stoke division and manipulate the domestic political and economic terrains of African countries to align with their geopolitics:

There is only one way in which Africa can stay outside irrelevant world conflicts and in which she can hope to deal with oppressing economic and social problems which now beset her people. The present boundaries must lose their significance and become merely a demarcation of administrative areas within a larger unit. This is an urgent and difficult matter; it becomes more difficult every day as the existing nation states fight tribalism by building nationalism. But there is, for the time being, the saving grace of an emotional unity, born during the independence struggle, and the universal recognition of the need for its development in political and economic terms (Nyerere 1967 cited in Sharp 2013, p.24).

Nationalism is often perceived as a strategy that promotes a country's self-interest to the detriment of the interests of other countries. However, Nyerere's Pan-African views underscore how there are often alternative ways of understanding concepts such as nationalism and explanations for why a country may adopt an ideology considered radical or problematic in other countries. It also highlights the importance of including subaltern voices in global discourses and aligns with this study's objective of giving precedence to the beneficiary country perspective of the politics of partnership in

TDC. However, the space for subaltern voices to be heard in international development has often been constrained by the considerable influence Northern cooperation providers, especially the World Bank, have had over policymaking and visions of what development should look like. If, as previously stated, Northern cooperation providers continue to select a few emerging Southern powers as pivotal partners in TDC and African countries as the beneficiary partners, then it would be logical to question if the transfer and mimicry of development experiences encouraged in TDC is any different from past development cooperation modalities. Specifically, is it any different from the Northern development cooperation that promoted modernisation theory based on the historical trajectory of a few Western countries? This thesis engages with this question by suggesting that postcolonial arguments about provincializing European knowledge frameworks need to be extended and heeded in South-South/trilateral cooperation.

Policy experiences from Chinese, Brazilian or Malaysian development trajectories cannot easily be replicated in other countries and current attempts to universalise them through TDC should be closely scrutinised. These influential Southern countries have started to codify, standardise and evaluate their development cooperation activities through forums such as the Network of Southern Think Tanks (NeST) in order to enhance the legitimacy of claims that SSC has many benefits. However, as Constantine and Shankland (2017) observe, most of these BRICS-led policy spaces do not always include representatives from beneficiary countries and are mainly aimed at advancing their geopolitical influence. Therefore, scholarship on the decolonization of knowledge production has to move beyond a focus on the hegemonic nature of Western knowledge systems and to interrogate the ways in which wealthy/influential Southern countries are suppressing knowledge that falls outside the frameworks that they are currently in the process of establishing or that opposes their interests. This is especially important given, as Mignolo (2012) points out, dewesternization should support decolonization and the creation of a pluriversal world where different political, economic and epistemic traditions are respected and co-exist, rather than a world where a single option dominates.

Nevertheless, it is unlikely that concentrated efforts will be made to ensure that the voices of beneficiary countries are effectively heard in policy circles, particularly those from Africa, given that Southern development knowledge and technologies are increasingly being commodified to generate diverse benefits for facilitating and pivotal partners in TDC. TDC is transforming into a vehicle for Southern countries that do not have sufficient finances/technical expertise to dedicate to development cooperation (such as Malaysia) to transfer their development knowledge and potentially influence the development trajectory of beneficiary countries. It is enabling wealthy Southern partners (such as China) to increase their soft power and build their image as responsible global actors. The commodification of Southern knowledge has also created an opportunity for Northern countries to act as intermediaries in this knowledge transfer process and “to maintain their foothold over the global development architecture” (Abdenur and Da Fonseca 2013; McEwan and Mawdsley 2012).

Policy literatures from the United Nations (UN) have also drawn on the perception that SSC is a modality that favours beneficiary country ownership in order to promote TDC as a vehicle for transferring and domesticating global policy frameworks. For example, TDC is seen as an important means for making progress on meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN 2018; UNOSSC 2018), in the same way that that SSC was hailed as a key mechanism to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) a decade ago (UN 2009). This is problematic since the UN, through such global frameworks, is exerting influence over what constitute the most pressing development needs in beneficiary countries. The SDGs also contradict the idea of country ownership by ignoring local contexts and, as McEwan (2019, p.230) points out, they also promote a ‘cookie-cutter’ approach to policymaking that risks perpetuating discourses of African failure by setting an unattainable timeline and targets. Observers such as Brooks (2017, p.203) have also argued that the SDGs only offer developing countries a limited number of solutions to complex challenges such as climate change, which do not adequately address the political and economic conditions found in African countries.

Moreover, despite growing resistance to the neoliberal drive for private sector development (PSD), UN and OECD-led policy spaces are using TDC to explicitly enhance private sector involvement in development (GPEDC 2016; UN 2019). Nevertheless, in a sign that learning is starting to flow from South to North, OECD-DAC members have also begun to mimic the Southern approach of using development interventions to secure mutually beneficial trade and investments. As Mawdsley (2018) points out, this change is still in line with the broader ideational shift in global policymaking over the last 30 years, which has seen economic growth replace poverty reduction and human development, as the central analytic concept and goal of development. It is not surprising, then, that Shankland and Gonclaves (2016) found that the World Bank texts heralding the potential for an ‘African green revolution’ through the replication of Brazil’s technology-driven agribusiness model, were influential in getting Mozambican policymakers to buy into the notion that more private sector involvement would fuel agricultural development. One of the outcomes of this process was the signing of an agreement between Mozambique, Brazil and Japan for the controversial TDC project known as ProSavana. The overall objective of ProSavana was to replicate the innovative policies Brazil employed in the agricultural development of its tropical savannahs. However, its implementation has been impeded for several years due to intense opposition from civil society organisations and small-scale farmers, who argue that the project’s promotion of a large-scale agribusiness model would damage the local ecosystem and the livelihoods of small-scale farmers (Parenti and Liberti 2018).

The contestation of the ProSavana project is an important example of how the political elite’s visions of what can be considered progress in a country do not always correspond with the aspirations of the whole population and indicates just how complicated it is to assess whose voice defines beneficiary country ownership of development. In order to serve as mitigating measures against such problems, policy literatures have emphasised that TDC should be ‘inclusive’ and ‘multi-stakeholder partnerships’ by involving civil society organisations, research institutions and the private sector as beneficiary partners in TDC projects (OECD 2017; UNDP 2017a). In spite of increasing arguments for inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships,

however, government ownership of development interventions remains a prominent theme in policy literature and the implementation of most South-South/trilateral cooperation projects. This is problematic given that there are limitations to ownership in countries with authoritarian governments or in cases where a government may agree on a project's objectives without being concerned about having leadership over the design and implementation, yet still consider this ownership (Buiter 2007).

The United Nations Economic and Social Council has stressed that leadership in TDC is shown by beneficiary governments when they define the priorities and needs of their country, but 'true' ownership is when other stakeholders such as parliament and civil society are included in the decision-making (UN-ECOSOC 2008). However, the presence of diverse interests and power inequalities between stakeholders within the beneficiary country can also constrain attempts to achieve true ownership and positive development outcomes that stand the test time (Buiter 2007; Biekart and Fowler 2018). This highlights the importance of examining which actors in the beneficiary country voiced the need for a development intervention and with whose vision of development it aligns with. This will enable a deeper understanding of how power inequalities within the beneficiary country and in its relationship with development cooperation providers affect country ownership and the development effectiveness of TDC projects. This thesis examines these power inequalities against the wider debates on African agency because various studies have stated that the *Zambian* government has at times found it difficult in negotiating and asserting its preferences to its cooperating partners since the Structural Adjustment era (Saasa and Carlsson 1996; Fraser 2009; Prizzon 2013). However, there is also a need to explore how Zambia is responding to the diverse challenges concerning the flow of knowledge and power relations as a beneficiary country in TDC.

African Agency

As discussed earlier in this chapter, prominent development texts during the era of Structural Adjustment in the 1980s and 1990, attributed underdevelopment in African

countries to weak institutional and human resources capacity in their governments (World Bank 1989a; World Bank 1989b). Stereotypes about the inadequacy of African culture, such as an inability to independently deliver results or manage time, were also prominent in Northern discourses and influenced top-down approaches to delivering development cooperation to beneficiary countries (Crewe and Harrison 1998; Baaz 2005). However, agency, which Taylor (2015, p.28) defines as “the capacity of individual agents to direct their structurally formed capabilities in ways that are imaginative and inventive for personal or communal advancement,” has always been a part of African countries engagement in development cooperation. As Mkandawire and Soludo (1999, p.26) point out, bureaucrats in some African countries used strategies such as lack of non-implementation of donor programmes to express dissatisfaction with Northern discourses that ‘vilified’ them and tarnished their post-colonial image as actors capable of guiding their countries towards industrial modernity. Noxolo (2006, p.261) argues that some aid-dependent governments used non-implementation of donor-funded development interventions to reinforce their autonomy and ownership of the local development landscape as their independent agency became hidden behind the disciplinary power of Northern donors to demand compliance to their policy conditions. In addition, Whitfield (2009) observed that some beneficiary governments responded to the disciplinary power of policy conditions by implementing the main reforms that donors demanded and overlooked others, in order to ensure the continued flow of development cooperation and the efficient functioning of their country’s economy.

The current debates on the resurgence of SSC have generally examined the African continent as a space in which the growing geopolitical influence of the emerging powers can be observed. As mentioned earlier, Northern governments often refer to China’s economic activities in the global South, and particularly in African countries, as a new form of colonialism (e.g. Bolton 2018). This is ironic considering that Chinese FDI in Europe, Australia, and North America exceed those to Africa, but are labelled as “strategic competition” (AEI 2019; BBC 2019). These debates on ‘Chinese colonialism’ have supported the persistent characterisation of African countries as economic reservoirs, objects of study and sites in need of intervention (McEwan 2019,

p.187). However, as Said (1993) points out, the imperial encounter has never involved an ‘active’ colonial power subjugating a ‘supine’ or inert other, rather where there is power there has always been some form of active resistance and agency. In the same way, African countries are not passively observing the risks and opportunities the emerging powers have created in the global development architecture, but they have demonstrated that they are using their presence to resist domination and protect their right to self-determination. For example, Mohan and Lampert (2012) and Kragelund (2014) have shown that the proliferation in the number of available development partners in the 2000s, when many African countries experienced a reduction in aid dependence, helped to expand the space for bureaucrats to explicitly articulate their needs and opinions to their partners. The governments of beneficiary countries such as Angola have even played their Northern and Southern development partners against each other in order to secure their own interests (Corkin 2013; Carmody and Kragelund 2016). The African Union has also actively sought to use South-South technical cooperation to support capacity development and technological advancement, as the notion that intellectual independence is the main way the continent can attain self-sufficiency has re-entered policy discussions over the last decade (AU 2011; UNECA 2019).

African countries have particularly shown interest in learning about East Asian models of industrial modernity and replicating the policy experiences of countries such as China, South Korea, India and Malaysia. Japan’s development trajectory, which laid emphasis on state-led industrialisation, infrastructure development, and investments in education and skills developments, is the blueprint of many of these Asian countries replicated through the support of Japanese technical cooperation (Kato 2012). Japan has also been crucial in facilitating the transfer of policy experiences from its former Asian beneficiaries to African countries, first by supporting South-South exchanges through what it described as third-country training programmes, and more recently through trilateral development cooperation (Kato 2012). Japan’s approach to country ownership, which focuses on only supporting projects officially requested and partially financed by beneficiary partners, has gained the favour of some African governments for enabling them to attain economic growth through what Japan

describes as their own efforts at ‘self-help’ (Sawamura 2004). As Burghart (2017) points out, Japan’s approach to ownership is similar to those of China and South Korea, in spite of it being a traditional Northern donor. However, observers have argued that the underlying goal behind this technical cooperation has been to consolidate East Asian models of economic development as the preferred alternatives for developing countries to follow, instead of the Washington Consensus model (Osei-Hwedie and Osei-Hwedie 2010; Raposo 2017). This has once again made technical cooperation an important soft power tool through which competing Eastern and Western development partners can battle for influence over policymaking in African countries, which is resonant of the Cold War tactics employed by the Soviet Union and Western countries. These developments have subsequently revived scholarly interest in some strands of dependency theory and questions concerning whether Africa’s increasing engagement in SSC is shifting the ‘core’ from the global North to influential Asian countries such as China (Agbebi and Virtanen 2017; Carmody 2017).

In all these debates, as Sharp (2013) reminds us, it is still important to recognise the voice and agency of African countries as the geopolitical subaltern. The African continent is at the centre of the most pressing global issues, hence there is need to theorise from events unfolding on the continent (Mbembe 2016). Despite this, research in international relations and development studies have tended to analyse its place solely with regards to the policy and security concerns of powerful states (Abrahamsen 2017). The continent has been treated as a space for extraction of raw data and the application of Western epistemologies, rather than as a site for “the generation of ideas and theoretical insights that have widespread and general relevance for the world” (Abrahamsen 2017, p.129). As Abdenur (2019, p.35) points out, this critique is not limited to research produced in Northern institutions, but also applies to scholarship from developing countries that uncritically employs Western-centred theories. Echoing similar concerns when reflecting on the importance of decolonizing knowledge production, Achille Mbembe emphasises that theorising from the continent entails putting Africa at the centre of things and building understanding from the perspective of African countries, rather than treating experiences in the continent as an appendix of other countries or as being rooted in their epistemic traditions (Mbembe

2016, p.35). It is generally agreed that this critique is not meant to imply that Western categories and concepts should be discarded, but rather as Chakrabarty (2008) argues, it should be acknowledged that even critical theories such as Marxism cannot adequately explain all experiences and events in the global South. Postcolonial theories are also rooted in Western epistemic traditions and hence can only partially explain issues of African agency or TDC activities. However, their commitment to recovering the voices of the marginalised, or the ‘subaltern in geopolitics,’ creates space for this study to open up to alternative explanations and to theorise from the experiences and knowledge of beneficiary countries.

In applying this idea of alternative explanations of beneficiary agency, this study contends that ongoing debates about Africa’s progressive shift from ‘dependency’ on Northern partners to Southern partners are also overlooking the extent to which mutuality influences international development and gives African countries significant geopolitical power. As Hurrell (2006) points out, a country does not only gain power from its recognition from other great powers but is also dependent on ‘weaker’ states accepting and recognising of its authority. The power and influence that Southern development cooperation providers have acquired in global development architecture has been dependent on ‘less developed’ countries actually seeking their knowledge and resources. This is similar to how the status in global governance structures traditionally wielded by Northern countries such as the United Kingdom has been dependent on the existence of countries in the global South that are either less developed or somehow in need of its trusteeship (Noxolo 2006, p.263).

At present, the majority of countries classified as ‘developing’ are located in Africa, which positions the continent with significant power to decide which development cooperation providers are influential. China’s role as the most significant provider of SSC cannot be solely attributed to its possession of technology or know-how on industrial modernity, it is also dependent on African countries seeking its development cooperation, which lays emphasis on state-led industrialisation, agricultural and infrastructure development (see Power *et al.* 2012). This is in contrast to South Korea’s marginal soft power influence in Africa, in spite of substantial financial commitments

to development cooperation activities aimed at promoting its own development experiences, particularly its approach to green growth (Kim and Gray 2016). This indicates that African countries also have the power to decide whose knowledge influences their development trajectory, and ‘what is’ or ‘what is not’ development knowledge through their selection of development partner.

African governments have not fully exploited the unexpected ways in which the rise of their ‘non-interfering’ Southern partners has expanded their space to exercise agency and determine national policymaking into, what Agbebi and Virtanen (2017) describe as, “clear strategies that promote the welfare of their citizens and facilitate development in crucial economic sectors.” Of course, there is always a risk of reproducing the stereotypes about the inadequacy of African beneficiaries with such an argument. However, this thesis chooses to understand this contradiction in agency through Adem's (2011, p.511) interpretation of Ali Mazrui's ‘triple heritage’ approach to acknowledging Africa: as a victim humiliated by slavery and colonialism, a victor with countless historic achievements, but also a villain for its high levels of post-colonial violence and economic mismanagement.¹⁰ Drawing on these ideas on the complexity of agency within Africa enables this research to critically examine beneficiary ownership, which may involve praising the Zambian government and other local stakeholders for their positive actions and holding them to account for their failures, as would be done to any other development partner. If this research was to do otherwise then it would fall into the trap of perpetuating the ‘narrative of predation’ (Power 2019, p.11), specifically that of a vulnerable African country being exploited by its powerful and calculating development cooperation providers. This would indirectly erase the agency of the beneficiary country and fail to capture the true nature of TDC partnerships.

¹⁰ Throughout his career Kenyan scholar Ali Mazrui explored how the development of African countries has been influenced by African traditions, religion (particularly Islam and Christianity) and the intervention of Western countries. Most notable is his ground-breaking 1986 BBC documentary *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that post-colonial developing countries conceptualised South-South technical cooperation as a mechanism through which they could foster capacity development, accelerate industrial modernity and assert the importance of their sovereignty in global governance structures. It was imagined that this process would enable them to de-link from their economic dependence and the coloniality of power that has historically enabled Northern agencies to influence their development trajectory. Northern countries have increasingly promoted TDC as a modality that supports country ownership and equality between all partners, partially as a response to past debates on the paternalism of their bilateral cooperation and effectiveness of their development solutions. These actions are part of Northern efforts to manage the dewesternization of international development that has been accelerated by the rise of alternative models of industrial modernity from middle-income Southern countries and approaches to delivering development cooperation promoted in SSC such as non-conditionality. However, this chapter has also shown that Southern ‘development authorities’ such as China, India and Brazil are reproducing familiar practices of mimicry, trusteeship and Orientalist assumptions about who is modern-backwards or the knower-learner in development cooperation, which have been embedded in the production and dissemination of knowledge in development knowledge since colonial times. These practices have the potential to constrain the extra space for country ownership and autonomy that the observance of non-conditionality in SSC, creates for beneficiary countries.

If we return to Mahbub ul Haq’s argument, set out at the beginning of this chapter, on how the overall goals of SSC can only be achieved if most activities do not rely on Northern networks, then it is also logical to question if developing countries will be able to maintain ‘the Bandung spirit of decolonization’ in a landscape where TDC involving both Northern and emerging Southern hegemonies appears to be the future of international development cooperation. As this chapter has pointed out, ongoing TDC is facilitating knowledge transfers from influential Southern countries from Asia and Latin America, while African countries are mostly being treated as the sites for

development interventions. This has the potential to work against the SSC objective of achieving self-reliance by ending the core-periphery opposition in global governance and transforming the periphery into a multitude of 'centres' that are not dependent on another entity (Rist 2002, p.135). Therefore, postcolonial critiques of development cooperation might help to expand our understanding of the relationship between power and knowledge in development by moving beyond a focus on the dominance of the global North to include the ways Southern hegemonies are also defining the space for beneficiary countries to control their development process.

Drawing on postcolonial ideas, this chapter also cast light on how the power of a development cooperation provider is always met with the agency of the beneficiary country. As a result, it should not be assumed that beneficiary countries are passively observing these changes or being acted upon, but rather they themselves are active. However, important questions still need to be considered, given that TDC can be used as a vehicle for the domestication of policy experiences and technologies from influential Southern countries and/or global frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, without consideration for the singularity of a country's development needs or experiences. It is important to ask if beneficiary countries like Zambia are uncritically accepting Southern development knowledge and global policy narratives on development in TDC projects or if they are only adapting practices that align with local development priorities and context. There is also a need to examine if there are conflicting views on the policy solutions/technologies transferred between the government and other local stakeholders such as civil society, academics and the private sector. Before proceeding to address these questions, the next chapter discusses the methodological approach employed to address the overall objective of this research. It explains the rationale for selecting Zambia as the case study, the definition of country ownership employed in the data collection process, and the ethical concerns involved in researching how the politics of partnership affect beneficiary country ownership of TDC.

3

Researching TDC: An Institutional Ethnographic Approach

This chapter moves on from the previous discussion on the conceptual framing of this thesis to discuss its empirical basis, its methodological approach and the data collection methods. It first sets out the rationale for case study selection and then provides an overview of how an institutional ethnography, based on key stakeholder interviews and archival analysis, was employed to collect and analyse data on country ownership of trilateral development cooperation (TDC). This chapter also sheds light on the importance of trust in elite interviewing and the difficulties involved in researching country ownership of TDC projects where the main stakeholders are government institutions, through a discussion of the challenges I encountered with informant recruitment. It also explores three unexpected methodological findings that I came across during fieldwork. First, several informants asked me to write up a brief report on my findings because they had very little knowledge of past projects and the general trends in South-South/trilateral cooperation in Zambia. This repeated request not only highlighted the empirical novelty of the research but also led me to reflect on the importance of reciprocity in the researcher-informant relationship. Second, some informants challenged geographical imaginations of the global North-global South binary and demonstrated that they viewed the discourse on South-South/trilateral cooperation employed in policy spaces and development texts as an ‘imaginary,’ while the technical aspects of project management are viewed as the ‘reality’ of development cooperation. This pushed me to reflect on postcolonial debates concerning the challenges involved in speaking on behalf of ‘the researched’ and the question of whose perspective is driving research on contemporary South-South relations. Third, I went into the field naively assuming that I was simply researching the partnership process and the outcomes of two TDC projects, but overtime time it became clear that my research was uncovering the domestic and international political concerns of partner countries, and for that reason, some of my informants assumed that I was

attempting to breach their national security. The limitations this imposed on the data collection, how these were navigated and the wider implications for research into TDC partnerships are discussed subsequently.

Case study selection

It is important for this chapter to address the rationale for selecting Zambia as a case study, since as Curtis *et al.* (2000, p.1002) argue, “there are ethical and theoretical implications arising from the choices which are made to include particular cases and to exclude others.” This thesis is built on recommendations from my Master’s dissertation which compared Chinese and Brazilian development assistance to African countries, and subsequent research on South-South cooperation (SSC) and the aid effectiveness agenda in southern Africa (Kamwengo 2017). These studies suggested the need for more empirically-based TDC research in order to assess the potential for competing for Northern and Southern countries to collaborate and improve the effectiveness of their development cooperation to beneficiary countries. These studies also emphasised the importance of acknowledging beneficiary agency in this process. Zambia was selected as the case study to gain a detailed understanding of beneficiary country experiences in TDC for this research due to my familiarity with its socio-economic and political context as a national of the country. Zambia has also gained prominence in recent debates on the changing geographies of power as one of the most visible sites of the ‘new scramble for Africa’ involving the BRICS, from which the re-engineering of Northern development cooperation after the 2008–9 global financial crisis can be seen, and new perspectives on African agency are being theorised (e.g. Carmody 2013; Prizzon 2013; Kragelund 2014; Sautman 2015).

Zambia has historically received development cooperation from diverse Northern and Southern partners since its independence in 1964. However, the government acknowledges that technical cooperation has been one of the most important modalities it has received from its partners because it has enhanced “the skills, knowledge, technical competence and productive aptitudes of its population towards

achieving sustainable socio-economic development” (MoF 2012, p.8). Technical cooperation has traditionally been received on a bilateral basis, but some of Zambia’s Northern and Southern partners have recently begun to support capacity development and technology transfer through TDC projects operating under the framework of South-South Cooperation. A scoping search conducted through informal discussions with development practitioners and a review of online literature revealed that it is difficult to provide a comprehensive list of TDC projects that have been implemented in Zambia. The main reason for this is that the government considers development cooperation a part of its diplomatic relations, hence the details of most development projects are usually classified as confidential. Press releases announcing development cooperation agreements occasionally appear in the news media but detailed information beyond such announcements are usually not made public. For example, a trilateral cooperation agreement on food security and nutrition between Zambia, Brazil and the World Food Programme (WFP) was announced during Brazilian President Lula da Silva’s official visit in 2010, but there are no reports available to establish whether this agreement materialised into a project (see Lusaka Times 2010).

In addition, the government does not know the full extent of development projects that have been implemented in the country itself, due to the fragmented management of development cooperation, repeated restructuring and poor communication between its different agencies (MoFNP 2011a). At present, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of National Development Planning, which is a sister institution that was established in 2016, have overall responsibility for negotiating and coordinating all development cooperation. However, the President, cabinet ministers and bureaucrats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have traditionally tended to interfere in this process by independently negotiating for development projects without consultation (MoFNP 2011a). In spite of the above limitations, two important case studies emerged from the scoping search on TDC projects in Zambia. The first is the Triangle of Hope (ToH) project which is an initiative that facilitated the transfer of Malaysia’s experiences in attracting foreign direct investment to Zambia, with the support of Japan from 2006 to 2012. The second is a project that supported renewable energy

technology transfer from China to Zambia, with the support of Denmark and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) from 2014 to 2019.

The primary reason both projects were selected is that detailed information on their background, main objectives and expected outcomes are available from Zambian newspaper articles and development cooperation reports from partner countries. Information on the China-Zambia renewable energy technology transfer (hereafter referred to as RETT) project is available through a project plan published online by UNDP and reports from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (UNDP 2014; Danida 2014b). Similarly, extensive details on the ToH project are available in publications from the Japanese and Malaysian partners that supported the project (e.g. Jegathesan and Ono 2008; JICA 2012; Shimoda 2012; JICA 2017). These texts outline the key objectives, activities and expected outcomes of both projects from the viewpoint of the development cooperation providers, but do not give insight into Zambia's views and experiences as the beneficiary country. In order to address this gap, this research used a qualitative research design, specifically an institutional ethnography (IE), to collect more information on each project and to answer its research questions:

1. What is the nature of partnerships developed through TDC?
2. To what extent does the politics of partnership support or undermine beneficiary ownership in trilateral development projects?
3. What are the consequences for development effectiveness in Zambia?
4. What lessons might be learned for TDC more broadly?

A multiple case design rather than a single case study was employed since the findings from multiple cases are usually more compelling and tend to enhance the generalizability of a qualitative study's practical and theoretical arguments (Yin 2009; Seale 2012). The approach of studying both the ToH project and the RETT project was also adopted so that this research can identify: (i) changes that may have occurred in the practice of partnership and country ownership over a period of almost 13 years; (ii) and any differences between TDC projects where an OECD-DAC member is the

facilitating partner (Japan in the ToH project) and where a multilateral institution is the lead facilitator (UNDP in the RETT project).

Methodology

Most empirically grounded studies on trilateral development cooperation are policy-based and an outcome of large-scale survey research (e.g. OECD 2017; UNDP 2017a). This is a weakness since, as Gardner and Lewis (2015, p.169) have argued, the rigid structure of surveys-based methods tends to dilute the role that power, politics and inequality bring to bear on development interventions. A number of the studies discussed in Chapter Two employed ethnographic methods, particularly an institutional ethnography, to open up new perspectives on how these processes influence the ways in which development interventions and discourses are produced, institutionalised and disseminated (Crewe and Harrison 1998; Baaz 2005; Goldman 2005; Li 2007). An institutional ethnography (IE) uses methods such as interviews, participant observation and document analysis to investigate how the texts and work practices of institutions influence everyday experiences (Walby 2013). Social anthropologists have used ethnographic methods to study how policymaking in colonial governance and development cooperation has shaped the world for many years (see Shore *et al.* 2011; Gardner and Lewis 2015). However, the term ‘institutional ethnography’ was coined by sociologist Dorothy Smith in her feminist critique of how the representation and silencing of women’s issues in sociological texts primarily written by men influences the relations that rule society and how people generally perceive these relations (Smith 1987).

Different branches of social science have since adopted IE to gain insight into the differences between ‘what people say they do’ in texts and ‘what they actually do’ in practice (Herbert 2000, p.552). Specific attention has been directed to studying how institutional texts tend to promote concepts or categories that represent an institution’s objectives rather than the actual practices of its members and the real-life experiences of the beneficiaries of its interventions; attention has also been directed at examining

the implications of these actions on other social relations involving governments, international organisations, the private sector and communities in the global South (Escobar 1995, p.109). From this perspective, I choose to employ an IE to bring to light potential differences between how TDC is presented in policy spaces as a modality that supports ‘country ownership’ and ‘sustainable development’ outcomes and the actual practices of the institutions involved in its implementation. It was not aimed at studying a specific institution involved in the ToH or RETT projects but to gain insight into how people involved in the management of each project interacted with one another, how these interactions were institutionalised in their respective organisations, and how their actions and project activities affect external spaces.

The main data collection methods employed were key stakeholder interviews and archival study. I also kept a fieldwork diary where I recorded my observations of my informants during interviews and key themes that emerged from our conversations. However, it was not possible to ‘spend time on the inside’ to observe the daily activities of a key stakeholder institution due to the temporality of both the ToH project and the RETT project. The ToH project concluded in 2012 and the RETT project was in the final phase of its life cycle at the time data collection for this research commenced in August 2017. In spite of this limitation, Billo and Mountz (2015, p.210) emphasise that IEs can rely on the discourse analysis of texts and recollections of people from within and beyond institutional spaces in cases where participant observation is not feasible, which is the approach adopted in this study. The aim of collecting data from these different sources was to support triangulation and increase the validity of the overall research findings. This is important given that some of the information required for this research is politically sensitive and opinions expressed in key stakeholder interviews may have been influenced by factors such as institutional policy.

The data collection and data analysis processes operated concurrently. Data analysis involves two data dialogues: the primary data dialogue takes place between the researcher and the interviewee or person observed, and the secondary data dialogue is between the researcher and the interview transcript, archival material and/or the field

notes (Walby 2013). Different approaches can be used to make sense of these data dialogues. However, I manually coded the interview transcripts according to the pre-determined themes to evaluate country ownership seen in Table 1, that is, demand-driven, multiple stakeholders, partnership and beneficiary leadership. The data obtained from interview transcripts were then triangulated with that obtained from archival material (specifically newspapers and policy reports) and notes on the informal aspects of the research encounter logged in my fieldwork diary. This led to some themes being dropped or re-categorised from what Walby (2013, p.145) describes as a ‘master theme’ to a ‘sub-theme’ as new concepts emerged in the data analysis process and enabled the production of conceptual arguments.

Table 1: Evaluating country ownership

Principle	Indicator
Demand-driven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner(s) who identified the development need or initiated the project. • The proportion of project design based on the preferences of the Zambian government (GRZ) compared to that of development cooperation providers.
Multiple stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which non-state actors participate in project planning and implementation.
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presence of common understanding on the partnership model, country ownership and project goals. • The extent to which competition and/or cooperation shapes relations between partners.
Beneficiary leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government strategy for managing TDC and negotiating differences with development cooperation providers or local stakeholders.

More specifically, this research process entailed asking key stakeholders about their interactions with one another and project activities (thereby addressing research question 1); and gaining insight into the ways institutional actors, policies or underlying interests either support or undermine the realisation of country ownership in TDC (research question 2). Triangulation of information from these interview transcripts with the literature collected on the two projects was carried out subsequently, to establish Zambia's ability to obtain effective and sustainable development outcomes from each project in spite of these politics of partnership (research questions 3 and 4). The research process also involved taking note of the details that informants were not willing to discuss in order to gain insight into sensitive areas of institutional and country policy (research question 4). Overall, this approach to developing a detailed IE enabled this study to map out the social relations that shape Zambia's experience as the beneficiary partner in the ToH and RETT projects and to uncover their linkage to the larger processes of power and politics transforming the local and international development landscape.

This methodology was also underpinned by a commitment to Chilisa's (2012) call for studies informed by postcolonial theory to privilege their research informants' ways of knowing and understanding into the collection and analysis of data, so as to avoid justifying and perpetuating institutionalised ideas about the 'deficiencies' of people from the global South that are not accurate. It also speaks to Smith (2012) and Briggs and Sharp's (2004) contention that the experiences of Southern people are often researched in Northern-based institutions without actually opening up to their theories and explanations when, from a postcolonial perspective, they should be the 'central terrain.' As the discussion in Chapter Two has shown, this shortcoming is common in research examining activities taking place in an African context. Academic research on international relations has often used Africa as a place "to reproduce and confirm the superiority of Western knowledge, epistemologies and methodologies" (Abrahamsen 2017, p.126). This research extends these arguments to include the marginalisation of African perspectives on debates about effective development cooperation and the changing geographies of power. An institutional ethnography was therefore deemed a suitable approach to access the voices of the 'subaltern in

geopolitics,’ but this research also recognises that are multiple stakeholders in each project and diverse viewpoints on ownership within the beneficiary country. This approach draws on an interpretive paradigm that recognises that there are multiple socially constructed realities and as a result, “statements on what is true or false should be understood as being culturally/historically bound and context-dependent, although some may have universal application” (Chilisa 2012, p.33).

This approach required that this research includes its Zambian informants’ theories and explanations concerning TDC and country ownership as legitimate and centrally important forms of knowledge in the data collection and analysis process. As a result, the semi-structured interview guide included the question: what does/did country ownership mean to you in this project, although a framework to define country ownership and guide the data collection was developed before commencing fieldwork.¹¹ This framework mainly comprises indicators found in global policy texts such as the Busan Declaration on Effective Development Cooperation and the NeST Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for South-South cooperation (OECD 2011; NeST Africa 2017). As set out in Table 1, it concentrates on identifying if a development intervention was driven by beneficiary demand, leadership and consultative multi-stakeholder partnerships. However, informant theories on development partnerships and definitions of ownership such as “getting what we want” were incorporated into the collection of data from archival sources and the analysis of the overall research findings. This was done not only to support epistemic diversity, but to also avoid any predetermined definitions turning into “straitjackets that could limit the ability for this research to capture the ways that social relations function, differ and change” (Abrahamsen 2017, p.133). The analysis of archival materials also helped to cast light on how informant statements on concepts such as ‘self-reliance’ are significant for understanding country ownership and the linkage to theories on dependency and modernity. The perspectives of the development cooperation providers in each project were also sought, and included in this study, in order to increase the validity of the research findings and to ensure a balanced

¹¹ See Appendix for interview template.

understanding of the partnership processes, project activities and lessons that can be learnt for improving the effectiveness of TDC. However, my intention in centring my Zambian informant's ways of knowing into the analysis of how the politics of partnership affects country ownership is to disrupt the dominant donor-driven narratives and expand the pluriversal ways of understanding South-South/trilateral development cooperation.

Fieldwork Overview

The first phase of fieldwork took place between August and September 2017 and was carried out in Lusaka, Zambia where most of the institutions and actors involved in the ToH and RETT projects are situated. The pilot study was aimed at determining my ability to secure access to the institutions and informants associated with both projects, and conducting a literature review in libraries such as the University of Zambia library in order to obtain publications on development cooperation by local researchers not easily accessible internationally. The second phase of fieldwork was conducted from January to March 2018 and was focussed on archival study and obtaining interviews with key stakeholders in the ToH project and RETT project, or officials with knowledge on related issues such as the renewable energy sector or the government's management of development cooperation. The final phase of data collection was conducted between August and December 2018 through email and Skype communication with key stakeholders from the RETT project global steering committee located in Beijing, China.

Key stakeholder interviews

Semi-structured interviews were held with a total of 14 key stakeholders from the ToH and RETT projects¹². Most of these informants were recruited directly through email

¹² See the Appendix for the full list of Primary Sources and a summary of each interviewee's project role, their institutional affiliation, and the date/duration of each interview.

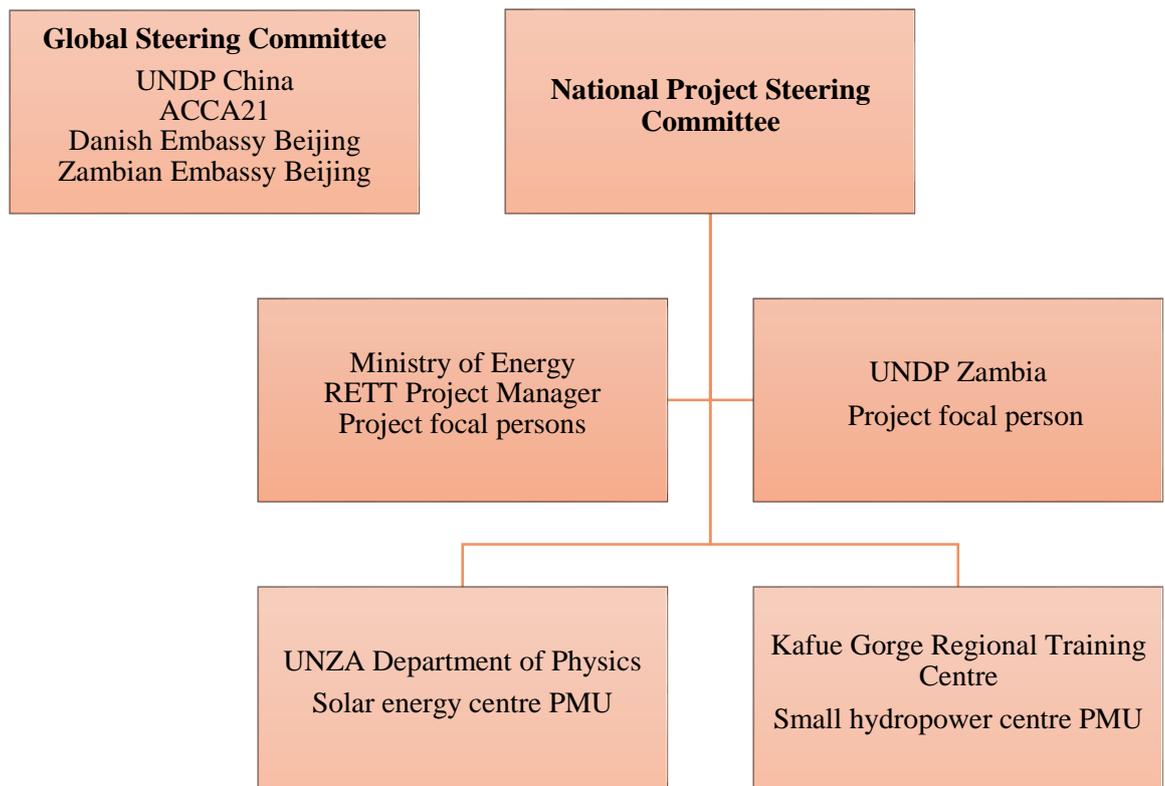
or telephone communication, but I was also able to use snowball sampling by asking each informant for recommendations on other project stakeholders who could be interviewed. On average it took 2 to 4 weeks from my first contact with an informant to the actual date of the interview. All of the interviews were conducted at the offices of my informants, with the exception of two that took place in a coffee shop. This resulted in some conversations being rushed or occasionally paused when an informant had to attend to their official responsibilities. For example, one of my informants was in the middle of finalising a USAID funding proposal and he kept running back and forth between the board room where our interview was taking place and his colleague's office. Another informant had to leave a departmental meeting that had run well over time to speak with me. Fortunately, most of the informants were genuinely interested in speaking to me and stated that they thought my research had important policy implications. I made the choice to not audio record any interview after the first few informants stated that they preferred for me to take down notes in my field book. This forced me to take note of additional details such as an informant's reactions to my questions and other aspects of the interview process after the end of each interview and to transcribe the whole interview within a few hours of its completion.

The first set of interviews were conducted during the pilot study phase. Interviewees included the RETT Project Manager, UNDP Zambia Project Focal Person, and two members of the RETT solar energy centre of excellence project management unit (PMU). The RETT Project Manager and the UNDP Zambia Project Focal Person had a strong interest in sharing information on renewable energy and their thoughts on South-South/trilateral cooperation during our discussions. They also encouraged me to go to the University of Zambia (UNZA) to view the solar energy centre of excellence at the Department of Physics, which was under construction at the time. However, they also attempted to discourage me from interviewing the members of centre's PMU and other participating institutions, stating that they would not have as much knowledge about the overall project activities and the partnership process, given the RETT projects complicated management structure (as seen in Figure 2). In order to confirm if this was true, I decided to contact the solar energy centre of excellence

Project Manager for an interview, but he was not in Lusaka and instead directed two members of his PMU team to meet with me. I found that his team members Mr C and Mr D had a keen interest in discussing the more technical aspects of the establishment of the solar energy centre of excellence but not the partnership process. For instance, when I asked them how the project started they suggested that I should talk to their project manager (Interview members of solar energy centre excellence PMU, 25 September 2017). This was not very surprising given, as Delaney (2007) points out, institutional elites tend to interpret interview requests as a request to interview them as a spokesperson for their organisation rather than as an individual with knowledge on a particular issue and they tend to fear the repercussions of making damaging statements.

During the second phase of fieldwork from January and March 2018, I was able to expand my knowledge of the RETT through interviews with the Project Manager of the solar energy centre of excellence, a member of Ministry of Energy's RETT project management unit, and Mr F who is a Biofuels Specialist who was involved in the early stages of the project. I was able to get valuable information on country ownership from my conversations with all of these informants, but they generally evaded any questions on the partnership process and directed me to speak to the RETT Project Manager or the UNDP Zambia Project Focal Person. However, the RETT Project Manager did not respond to emails and text messages asking for a follow-up interview, while the UNDP Zambia Project Focal Person kept responding "I'll get back to you" but to no avail. This was surprising given that both informants had previously shown enthusiasm during my pilot study and agreed to participate in another interview. I did not have an opportunity to interview members of the small hydro power centre of excellence at Kafue Gorge because its construction had not yet begun at the time I was conducting fieldwork, a factor which informants told me was the main reason the RETT's expected completion date was shifted from August 2018 to late 2019.

Figure 2: RETT project management structure



(Source: Author)

Interviewees on the Triangle of Hope project included: the ToH Project Coordinator, a member of the Banking and Finance taskforce, a member of the Health sector taskforce, and a representative from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). However, the ToH project’s status as a completed project made it very difficult for me to recruit informants from its main participating institutions such as the Ministry of Commerce Trade and Industry (MCTI), Zambia Development Agency (ZDA), and the Zambia Chamber of Commerce Trade and Industry (ZACCI). I found that many of the bureaucrats that participated in the ToH project, had either retired or transferred to other institutions and current staff had little knowledge on the project. One potential informant on the ToH Banking and Finance taskforce declined an interview because he had worked on several projects in his career and could not remember specific details

on the ToH. When I told him that only JICA reports on the ToH were available, he responded by saying that he was looking forward to reading any publications that I produced from my thesis so that he could remember what had happened from the Zambian perspective. These challenges with interviewee's partial memory were also encountered by JICA during its ex-post evaluation of the ToH project in 2016:

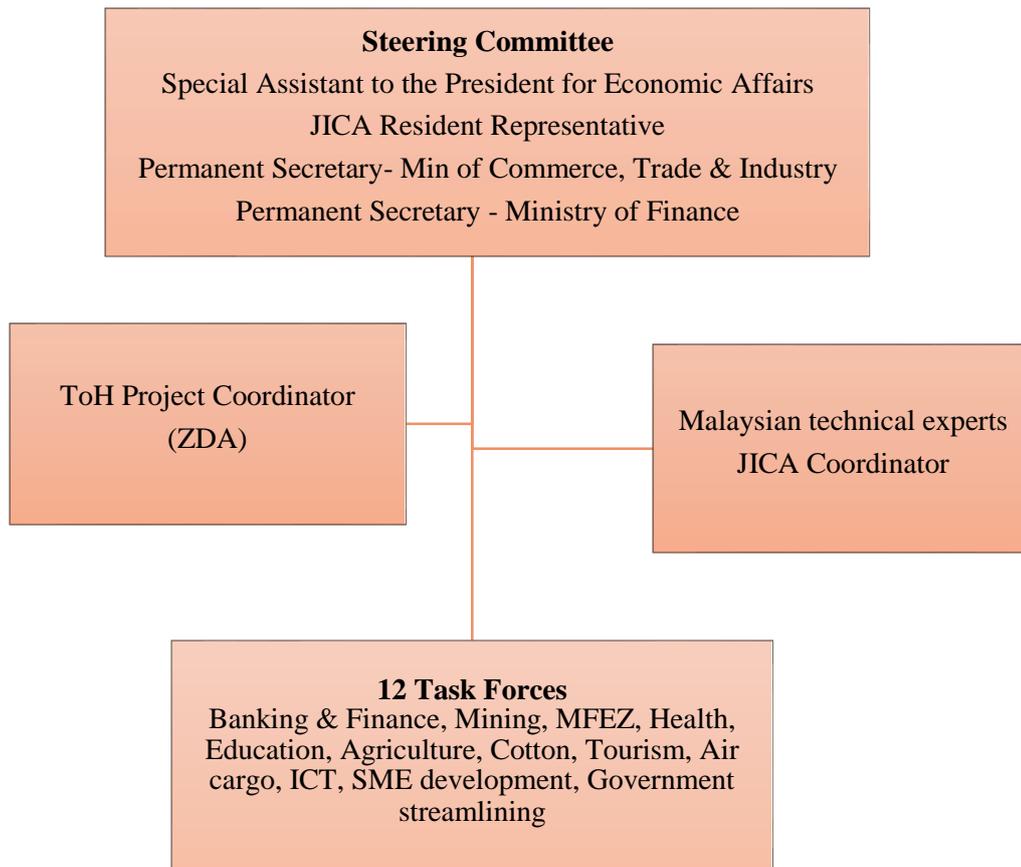
When we were doing the ex-post evaluation we found that no one at MCTI could answer questions on the ToH project. The people at Cabinet Office told us that they would not be able to provide answers for most of the survey questions. Most of the people working there told us that they had heard that there was once a project called the Triangle of Hope but they didn't know anything about it...Do you know that these institutions don't even have [post-implementation] documents reporting on what they did in this project? (Interview with Mr H, JICA Programme Officer, 5 February 2018)

Mr H also described his frustration with some high-level bureaucrats who refused to be interviewed on their role in the Triangle of Hope because they were retired and felt they were under no obligation to answer his questions. He also described the challenges he had in getting access to the Lusaka South multi-facility economic zone (MFEZ), which was one of the main outputs from the ToH project, to take a photograph for JICA's report. My conversation with the JICA Programme Officer not only corroborated my findings on how difficult it is to secure access to policy elites in Zambia but it also clarified a number of details on the ToH project outcomes. This drew my attention to the importance of triangulating some of the statements made by Zambian stakeholders in the RETT project through interviews with their Danish and Chinese partners. Subsequently, after completing initial data analysis, I spent August to December 2018 seeking interviews with representatives from the UNDP China country office, Royal Danish Embassy in Beijing and the Administrative Centre for China's Agenda 21 (ACCA21).¹³ However, I was only able to secure an interview

¹³ ACCA21 is the unit under China's Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) responsible for organising and implementing RETT project activities.

with the RETT Programme Manager at UNDP China and a representative from the Danish Embassy. I also interviewed a policy analyst from the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) headquarters in New York to get a general understanding of how African countries are engaging with South-South/trilateral cooperation and to situate my findings within this wider context.

Figure 3: ToH project management structure



(Source: Shimoda 2012; Interview with ToH Project Coordinator, 17 January 2018)

There are several other people who could have potentially served as informants on the ToH and RETT projects but many were reluctant to do so, in spite of assurances about

the confidentiality of interviews and the anonymization of informant identities in my thesis. Some individuals were willing to act as ‘facilitators’ of my research. As Haug (2019, p.158) notes, research facilitators are distinct because they do not require monetary payment like brokers or translators, and they cannot be described as gatekeepers because they do not have direct influence over access to research informants. My research facilitators helped me to ‘get in’ the different research sites by suggesting and providing contact details of people from whom I could seek interviews on the ToH and RETT projects, or they shared documents related to the case study. These facilitators also helped me to ‘get on’ with my research by engaging in informal discussions on my research topic and providing suggestions on thematic areas I should explore. Even though I benefitted from this valuable assistance, the overall informant recruitment process was not easy and underscored just how difficult it is to study the activities of policymaking institutions and international organisations.

Archival study

The archive offers researchers a rich source of information on “the historical antecedents of current development practice vital to understanding why things are done the way they are today and how they might be done in the future” (Jennings 2006, p.243). This is because development interventions do not occur in isolation but often emerge in response to a particular development need or trends in development thinking. For this reason, archival study was adopted as an additional research method for collecting information on the ToH and RETT projects, filling gaps in informant memory, and triangulating statements made in key stakeholder interviews. The main archival materials consulted were newspapers, national development plans and policy reports. The main source of these materials was the National Archives of Zambia (NAZ) in Lusaka, which I was able to gain access to by paying a 1-year membership fee. Thereafter, on each visit I simply had to complete a request form with the names and dates of the newspapers I wanted to consult and a librarian would return with the newspapers, which were leather-bound together into a book covering a 3 to 4 month time period. Seale (2012) argues that archival research needs to be systemic, but it is

also time-consuming, which is why my analysis in the NAZ was limited to two newspapers, namely, *The Times of Zambia* and *The Post*. The reason for selecting these two papers was to capture the government point of view from the state-controlled *Times of Zambia* and an alternative view from *The Post*, which was the country's leading privately-owned newspaper until its closure in 2016. Most newspapers from 2013-2018 are digitised and accessible from online archives including *AllAfrica.com*, as a result, newspapers from this time period were excluded from my research at NAZ.

The study of newspaper archives may seem an odd choice when researching TDC in other countries, but they are an important source of information in the Zambian context. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the Zambian government does not publish detailed reports on the development cooperation it receives from foreign countries. However, as seen in Figure 4, senior government officials often use the press to announce the signing of development cooperation agreements and occasionally provide updates on the progress made on individual projects. This led me to systemically examine newspapers from January 2005 to December 2012 for stories linked to the ToH project and newspapers from January 2014 to 2018 for stories on the RETT project. This analysis was primarily guided by the indicators on country ownership in Table 1, but also incorporated important themes that emerged from key stakeholder interviews and my discussions with research facilitators over the course of fieldwork. These themes which are discussed in subsequent chapters include: the role of the state in development; the civil service's efficiency to engage in strategic planning; the decline of the government's relationship with its Northern partners; and the strengthening of China-Zambia relations. The review of news articles also enabled me to get a sense of the government's vision of private sector development, trade, foreign direct investment (FDI) and renewable energies, which are the main focal points of the ToH and RETT project. It also enabled insight into how the long-term sustainability of project outcomes was affected by domestic political changes.

The archive also served as an important source of key government documents such as *The First National Development Plan 1966-70* from which I was able to critically understand the historical context of agency, development planning and the role of

development cooperation in Zambia's development landscape. My research informants and research facilitators also emerged as a contemporary archival source by providing me with copies of government documents such as the *Zambia Aid Policy and Strategy 2005* and *Development Cooperation Report 2010*. As the discussion in Chapter Four shows, the analysis of these policy reports and national development plans helped me to identify the dominant discourse concerning development in Zambia (including the role of trade/FDI and renewable energy) and to contextualise the ToH and RETT project activities within this discourse. It also allowed me to map how the government's space to determine policymaking has been affected by the country's economic stability, level of aid dependence and its relations with its Northern and Southern development partners.

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•JAPANESE Ambassador to Zambia, Masaaki Miyashita (left) and Finance Minister, Ng'andu Magande (right) exchange technical co-operation agreement documents after a signing ceremony in Lusaka yesterday.

(UTH) mortuary. According to family members, Mr Sakala was the house to go and pick children from school lapsed before getting car. According to his Mary, Mr Sakala was did not complain of in the morning before for work. "He did not complain thing and I was just and told that he had We had lunch together left him home," she said. She said her husband suffered a muscle the leg, which had was advised by there was nothing ening. The funeral is his house on Hands-Worth Great East Road Munalu Filling He joined Zambia as a sports on April 27, 19 worked for 2

Zambia, Japan sign agreement to enhance implementation of projects

By Times Reporter

ZAMBIA and Japan have signed a technical cooperation agreement aimed at enhancing the effectiveness in the implementation of projects funded by Japan.

The agreement which covers six types of technical co-operation was signed in Lusaka yesterday by Finance and National Development Minister, Ng'andu Magande and Japanese Ambassador to Zambia, Masaaki Miyashita.

The areas in the agreement are technical cooperation projects, development study, seconding of Japanese volunteers, providing training to Zambian nationals and provision of equipment.

Mr Magande expressed gratitude to Japan's continued support to Zambia.

He said Government was pleased that Japan chose Zambia as the first country in Africa in which to implement a model initiative in economic development towards sustainable development known as Triangle of Hope.

"The Triangle of Hope is indeed to give a basis for hope because it aims at applying some of the developmental approaches that have worked effectively in South-East Asia, a region in which Japan has recorded successes in development cooperation," he said.

Mr Magande said Government would demonstrate commitment to this initiative by doing whatever was within its power to ensure that the initiative succeeded.

"However, we appeal to the Government of Japan to consider supporting us more in the area of infrastructure development because this will be a critical factor in the success of the Triangle of Hope," he added.

In response, Mr Miyashita said the agreement was important because technical assistance occupied a critical component of the Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA), which contributed to capacity building for Zambian nationals through transfer of technology.

He was confident that the signed agreement on technical cooperation would constitute a long-term solid base that would contribute to the enhancement of the welfare of the people of Zambia and subsequent economic development of the country.

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Figure 4: News article illustrating how the signing of an agreement on the Triangle of Hope was announced in the government-owned daily the *Times of Zambia* on 28 June 2006.

Ethical considerations: Reputations at stake, political interests at play

This research was subject to ethical approval procedures in the Department of Geography at Durham University. It was also guided by the RGS-IBG Development Geographies Research Group's Ethical Guidelines for conducting research in developing countries, specifically with regards to the principles of consent, confidentiality, risks, reciprocity and responsibility (DARG 2009). In order to ensure that informed consent is obtained for an interview, I first shared the objectives of the research with an interviewee and then sought verbal consent to proceed with the interview. Permission was also sought to either record the contents of the interview with a digital recorder and/or in my notebook. Elite interviews are of a sensitive nature. As a result, each interviewee was assured that the contents of our conversation were confidential and their identity would be anonymised in this thesis and other publications that may result from the research. The option of stopping the interview or not answering questions that made them feel uncomfortable was also provided. Some informants insisted that they did not want their identities anonymised, however, I have used codes (such as Mr A, B and C) instead of names to protect all informants from reprisals or unforeseen risks arising from statements made on institutional practices or government policy. Finally, there are significant economic inequalities between the UK and Zambia, as a result, I had to take care to not make unrealistic promises on research outcomes when trying to gain access or encourage cooperation from potential informants/institutions. This includes, for example, when the solar energy centre of excellence Project Manager gave me a tour of the construction site and asked me to help facilitate potential partnership opportunities with British research institutions or businesses in the renewable energy sector.

In the process of trying to secure key stakeholder interviews on the ToH project, I also found, as Keikelame (2018) argues, that it is important for a researcher to have critical awareness of the socio-cultural and political context of their field site and its potential impact on the positionality of research informants. My efforts to find informants on the ToH project at Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) can illustrate this point. I first

visited ZDA's offices in August 2016 (just before commencing my PhD research) to inquire if they had publications on the ToH project. The receptionist I found on that occasion was friendly and told me that ZDA had not published any reports on the ToH project, but she went on to quickly call a senior colleague who had worked on the project. I had a brief chat with this person and they both assured me that I could easily get an interview for my PhD research once I returned to Zambia for fieldwork. As a result, I went to ZDA in September 2017 naively assuming that my ability to gain access would be just as smooth and was surprised to find it was not:

When I visited the ZDA offices to inquire if there was anyone I could talk to about the ToH project, the front desk receptionist refused to connect me to anyone. She insisted in a raised voice that although she did not know what the ToH project was even about, every government project was an issue of national security and therefore no one could speak to me unless I put in a written request to from the Managing Director. She also emphasised that it could take up to 12 months for the Managing Director to respond to my letter so it was not guaranteed that I would obtain his permission. (Entry in fieldwork diary, 22 September 2017)

Initially, I dismissed this encounter and concluded that the receptionist's suggestion that my research had implications on Zambia's national security to be an extreme reaction. I was fortunate enough to find a research facilitator with a relative who had worked at ZDA for many years and successfully connected me to a former colleague Mr E, who had worked on the ToH project as the Project Coordinator. Mr E told my research facilitator that he was willing to speak to me but this did not secure an easy interview. When I called Mr E to formally ask for an interview he asked how I had acquired his contact details and why I wanted to interview him of all the people at ZDA that had worked on the ToH project. He told me that he had recently left his senior management position at the agency and did not like talking about his work, but that he would give me approximately 30 minutes within which to meet him for an

interview at a coffee shop. When we eventually met he questioned: (i) if my Durham University business card was real or made-up; (ii) if I was truly was resident in the United Kingdom for a PhD or if I lived in Lusaka; (iii) and how I knew his former colleague who had helped me to get his contact details. At this point, I realised that Mr E was insinuating that I was possibly a state security agent using the identity of a researcher to cover up a hidden agenda.¹⁴ These challenges are not unique to my study, Ching Kwan Lee encountered similar difficulties while researching Chinese construction and mining investments in Zambia, due to her dual identity as a citizen of Hong Kong and the United States. Lee (2018, p.182) notes that in spite of providing her university webpage and publications as evidence that she was a sociology professor, some Zambian officials suspected that she was a spy for the Chinese government, or a private corporation, and refused to speak with her.

Luckily, in my case, Mr E did consent to the interview and, once he was satisfied with my answers, he gave the green light, “okay ask me first your question.” Before proceeding I asked for permission to record our conversation and reiterated that the contents of the interview would be kept strictly confidential and his identity would be anonymised if quoted in any publications. However, he quickly responded: “No, no, and no. I don’t want to find out later on that you are sharing our conversation on WhatsApp or Facebook and then I start to have problems. Just take down notes in your book.”¹⁵ I followed his instructions but he still carefully observed what I wrote down in the notebook, at one point he even leaned over to flip the pages and doodle in the notebook when explaining the ToH project management structure. These actions established what he perceived to be the power relations, with me as the researcher in the subordinate position and him as the bearer of knowledge in the dominant position.

¹⁴ Zambia was a one-party state from 1972 to 1991. Since this era of governance, there has been a widely held belief that officials from the intelligence service often pose as normal professionals or even as students in order to collect information and monitor public dissent.

¹⁵ In 2014, a cabinet minister had a private conversation on domestic politics secretly recorded and shared widely on social media platforms. Several prominent figures have found themselves in similar situations since then. For more, see Ndhlovu, G. (2014) 'Leaked Recordings of Zambian Ministers' Conversations Raise Privacy Concerns', *Advox Global Voices*, 26 October 2014, available: <https://advox.globalvoices.org/2014/10/26/leaked-recordings-of-zambian-ministers-conversations-raise-privacy-concerns/> [accessed 1 June 2018].

However, I observed that he was generally on edge throughout our conversation and alert to anyone eavesdropping. He also exhibited anxiety whenever I took down notes on ToH project outcomes that were not controversial at the time the project was implemented, but are politically sensitive issues in the present-day context. This includes, for example, plans for the expansion of the air cargo hub at the Lusaka International Airport which has been financed by loans from China Exim Bank and is alleged to have undergone several delays due to financial mismanagement (see Lusaka Times 2019). His visible discomfort forced me to memorise, but avoid writing down, certain points until after the interview was complete.

Similar forms of anxiety were displayed by my other informants whenever I wrote down statements that they made that touched on government policy, were critical of the senior government leadership or critical of China-Zambia relations in the case of the RETT project. This is in spite of reassurances about the confidentiality of our conversations and the anonymization of identities. These challenges reflect the wider difficulty involved in interviewing institutional elites, particularly those linked to what Kuus (2013, p.129) refers to as a country's 'principle bureaucracies of geopolitics' which includes finance, trade and foreign affairs. The policy elites that Kuus interviewed as part of her ethnographic study of the European Union's (EU) external relations expressed unease and evaded certain questions in ways similar to my informants. This led Kuus (2013) to conclude that the difficulty involved in gaining access to bureaucratic organisations and persuading elites to open-up has created a glass ceiling on the ethnographic study of the upper levels of social stratification. However, the distinctive factor in this research is that my informant's fear of being quoted and their assertions that the ToH project is related national security were linked to the sensitive political environment at the time I was conducting fieldwork in Zambia. A state of emergency had been declared by the president in June 2017 due to political tensions, and was still in force during my fieldwork. Senior government officials were repeatedly warning civil servants against openly discussing government

activities.¹⁶ Numerous stories were also circulating in the media about how civil servants who were openly criticising the Executive's interference in policy planning and the negotiation of development projects were being forced into early retirement, redundancy or transferred to work in remote rural districts. Members of the public were also being arrested for publicly expressing negative views of the president or his management of the national economy, which the state treats as defamation and a crime punishable by imprisonment.¹⁷ Another issue that may have created anxiety was that the president had embarked on a countrywide tour to assess the implementation of development projects and was critical of civil servants overseeing projects that were behind schedule.¹⁸

My research was taking place against this background, hence it was reasonable for my informants (who are mostly mid-level ranking officials) to question my agenda and to be reluctant to speak about the politics of the ToH project and RETT project. These contextual issues made me realise the limits to which researchers can make a comprehensive assessment of beneficiary country ownership of TDC where the main implementing partners in a project are government institutions and where decision-making power is highly centralised. They also highlighted the linkages between the state's role in development planning and country ownership of TDC, an issue which will be examined further in subsequent chapters. However, on reflecting on why development practitioners find ethnographic research threatening, David Mosse argues that most organisations tend to perceive ethnographic study as a professional evaluation that does not allow them to negotiate on what can be an acceptable narrative in its report. Mosse (2011, p.55) points out that:

¹⁶ Miti, C. (2018) 'Chasaya advises civil servants to follow job descriptions', *The Mast*, 18 January 2018.

¹⁷ For example, in January 2018 a medical doctor was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for publishing satirical images and statements on Facebook. For more, see Amnesty International (2018) 'Zambia: Release medical doctor jailed for 'insulting the president' immediately and unconditionally', 9 May 2018, available: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/05/zambia-release-medical-doctor-jailed-for-insulting-the-president-immediately-and-unconditionally/> [accessed 1 June 2018].

¹⁸ Mvula, S. (2018) 'Shiwang'andu projects delay worry Lungu', *Zambia Daily Mail*, 29 January 2018.

ethnography draws attention to the irrelevant, the routine the ordinary; it examines the instability of meaning rather than defining the successful outcomes of expert design; and when it turns its attention to the unnoticed effects of analytical forms, it detracts from the substance of official narratives.

Given that academic research is now easily accessible through the internet one seemingly harmless anecdote revealed to me as the researcher could unintentionally reveal a project failure/weakness. This would enable my account of the project activities and the partnership process to unravel the established narrative on the ToH project and the RETT project promoted by participating institutions which highlight project success rather than failures or complexities. This is probably another reason why institutional actors were anxious and skilfully resisted some of my questions or interview requests. This is equally true even of representatives from Northern cooperation providers, who are often praised for being more transparent. For example, when I contacted the person listed as the RETT Programme Manager on UNDP China's official website, his initial response was to enquire how I had acquired his name, contact details and knowledge that he had been involved in the RETT project. He eventually refused to discuss his time on the project, but did connect me to the new programme manager, who in turn emphasised that he had only been hired to close off the project and so could only speak with authority on activities from 2018 (Interview with UNDP China RETT Programme Manager, 7 September 2018). He also encouraged me to access more information on the RETT project through its website but this was essentially UNDP's official narrative of the project.

JICA showed more openness to discussing the ToH project as a facilitating partner when compared to UNDPs guarded approach to handling enquiries on the RETT project. However, JICAs flexibility may be related to the fact that the ToH project had been complete for almost 5 years by the time I was conducting my fieldwork, while

the RETT project was still ongoing.¹⁹ Several geopolitical considerations were also at play with the RETT project, for example, feasibility studies were being undertaken to assess how UNDP and China could replicate the project in Ethiopia at the time I was conducting fieldwork. The growing accusations that China is using ‘debt-trap diplomacy’ to gain significant influence over the Zambian economy, also made research on Chinese development cooperation including the RETT project a particularly sensitive subject (see Laterza and Mususa 2018). All of this may have contributed to my failure to secure an interview from Chinese representatives in the RETT project, although this is not surprising considering the Chinese government’s standard secrecy on its development cooperation (see UNDP 2017b). In August 2018, I called the Ministry of Science & Technology’s office in Beijing to request an interview, through the assistance of a Chinese-speaking colleague but was directed to speak to the RETT project management team at ACCA21. Despite stating that I was a PhD researcher, the first question the ACCA21 Project Manager who answered the re-directed call asked was: are you really a reporter and which newspaper do you work for? She eventually agreed to an email interview after reassurances that I was only a student but stipulated that I had to send her a list of interview questions beforehand and that I would only receive a response if the questions had no implications for China’s national security. This was the second time national security was brought up in relation to my research. After following this condition and receiving confirmation that my research questions did not pose a security risk, I waited for a response but it did not materialise (see appendix for questionnaire outline). Taking into account that most civil servants have a heavy workload and preparations for the 2018 Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) were underway at the time, I decided to wait 3 weeks to make a follow-up call. I was reassured that a response to my questions would be sent by the end of the week, but this did not happen. After going through the same cycle over a period of 4 months, I came to the conclusion that the ACCA21 official was using a less direct approach to rejecting my interview request.

¹⁹ I did not get to speak to anyone who actually worked on the ToH project at JICA but the Programme Officer who happened to have conducted the project ex-post evaluation was assigned the task of speaking to me.

This experience brought to mind a conversation with one of my research facilitators during fieldwork in Lusaka who had mentioned that Chinese officials were refusing interviews from Northern-based researchers due to the negative coverage of China-Africa relations in news and academic publications over the last decade. Clark (2008) uses the term ‘research fatigue’ to describe the reluctance of potential informants to engage with further research due to past experiences that did not result in positive outcomes, which to some extent, may also explain my failure to secure an interview from ACCA21. Determining the extent to which research fatigue is affecting the study of China-Africa development cooperation falls beyond the scope of this study. However, suggestions that it is affecting research in Zambia, does highlight important ethical considerations about the expectations and affective responses (anxiety, suspicion and frustration) of fatigued groups in qualitative studies. It also raises questions about the lengths to which a researcher should go to recruit informants from fatigued groups in order to address their research objectives. Nevertheless, this does not detract from the fact that “the work of institutions is one of the most powerful forces in the creation of the world in which we live” (Escobar 1995, p.107), and for that reason, their practices should be scrutinised and brought to light.

Power and Positionality

The researcher needs to be reflexive “about how his or her own cultural and intellectual position shapes their apprehension and discussion of data” (Herbert 2000, p.563). This is especially important for avoiding bias in qualitative studies since the researcher is the main data collection and data analysis instrument. Reflexivity requires that the researcher maintains an open and enquiring mind, is a patient listener so that the affective elements of an interview can be captured, and is responsive to unanticipated or contradictory findings that emerge throughout the research process (Yin 2009). Ethnographic studies also require the researcher to reflect on how power relations with their informants shapes knowledge production. In ‘studying down’ the researcher usually has significant power to gain access, extract and interpret the data

collected on the life of ‘the researched’. This has historically enabled subjective and damaging ideas about the global South to be published, such that some scholars (Chilisa 2012; Smith 2012) have even compared the researcher-researched relationship to that of the coloniser-colonised. However, the exercise of power is, as I found, much more complex when ‘studying up’ since policy elites are often more influential than the researcher and skilled at resisting intrusive inquisition (Harvey 2011).

During fieldwork, I found that my positionality as a Zambian national situated me as an ‘insider’ to the extent that I had the ability to understand cultural nuances and an idea of which questions made individual informants uncomfortable and close-up. However, my role as a researcher from a university located in the United Kingdom simultaneously situated me as an ‘outsider’ whose trustworthiness and ‘real’ intentions were questioned by my informants. On average the first 5 minutes of each interview involved an informant questioning me on issues such as: my nationality; my academic background – some informants were suspicious as to why I was asking questions about development cooperation when my business card stated that I came from Durham’s Geography department; and the overall research objectives of my thesis. It became clear from these questions that informant perceptions of my identity were an important factor in determining the type of information they were willing to share with me. I got the sense that they wanted to know if I was a local with the country’s best interest at heart or an outsider who could not be trusted with sensitive information, the disclosure of which could result in personal repercussions or other unforeseen circumstances. However, once interviewees were satisfied with my answers most interviews usually progressed smoothly. That is until, I steered our conversation towards the politics of partnership, at which point my informants would become hesitant and again question the real intentions behind my research. This made establishing trust with my informants an important part of the data collection process.

I always had to reflect very carefully on how I would present myself to an informant before every interview. I often carried out some research online on my interviewee’s professional profile so that I could understand their interests and possible sensitive

areas to avoid in the interview. However, I found that this preparation was often futile because the real power to set the tone of the interview was held by my informants. Ryan's (2015) use of the metaphor of an unstructured dance to describe the interview process, perfectly captures how I could not foresee the exact steps an informant would take, but I constantly had to be prepared to adjust myself to match their rhythm and ensure smooth data collection. For example, I observed that several of my male informants approached the interview as if I was 'clueless' young woman and they were my lecturer and so I had to feign limited knowledge on development cooperation. Others, however, first challenged my basic knowledge on their project or SSC more generally, before showing a willingness to answer my questions. The UNDP Zambia Project Focal Person even tried to bait me with political talk in order to determine the kind of person I was, in terms of my political views. These multiple and shifting positionalities I encountered over the course of fieldwork underscored the informant's role and power in shaping researcher identity. However, one area that I had the most difficulty in navigating during these interviews was my informant's perceptions of the 'real' and 'imagined' spaces in South-South/trilateral development cooperation.

I found that most of my Zambian informants distanced their project activities from the notion of trilateral development cooperation although most accepted the use of the term South-South cooperation. For example:

We at the project level in terms of interaction, we are stronger on the South to South exchange. On trilateral cooperation, the donor which is Denmark provided the funding for the project so their interaction with us is only at the Global Steering Committee (GSC) level....We are really cooperating as two countries China and Zambia, but the GSC keeps checking us just to make sure that the project is going according to plan. (Interview with RETT Project Manager, 22 September 2017)

This was not a trilateral project. Malaysia was not a major factor in this project. It was just one of the many Asian countries that was involved in the project. We had investment promotion missions to Malaysia, India, Bangladesh, South

Korea and Thailand...I would say the ToH project was more of a bilateral partnership between Zambia and Japan but project implementation involved several Asian countries. Technical knowledge of Malaysia's development experiences was used in the project, and that is where the Malaysian consultants came in. Otherwise, no Malaysian government agency was directly involved in the project implementation. However, I would agree to say that it was a South-South exchange because all of these Asian countries are part of the South. Isn't Japan part of the South also? (Interview with ToH Project Coordinator, 17 January 2018).

The above statements demonstrate that geographical imaginations of the global South are indeed complicated. I reflect on how these viewpoints affected the data collection process in Kamwengo (2019), and argue that they seem to be the result of SSC being something old and familiar, while TDC is still the unknown at present. Most informants emphasised that they had extensive experience of managing or evaluating donor-funded projects and, as a result, they engaged in the ToH project or RETT project as if each was just another development project. They also generally distanced their project activities from the wider discourse of SSC and emphasised that they did not see the global North/South distinction because they often worked with different development cooperation providers in their respective sectors, be that investment promotion, renewable energy, health or banking and finance. The only difference, according to Mr K based on his experience working at the Ministry of Finance, is that North-South cooperation and South-South cooperation have different histories, conditions guiding their negotiation and notions of what they considered transparency/accountability (Interview with ToH Banking and Finance taskforce member, 28 February 2018). He and other informants hinted that they expected me, as a Zambian national, to understand this viewpoint and ensure that my questions on their project activities reflected this and not the discourse of South-South/trilateral cooperation found in international policy documents.

Through these discussions, I also realised that these informants perceived the technical aspects of project management (planning, implementation and evaluation) as the ‘reality’ of development cooperation and the way that South-South/trilateral cooperation activities are discussed in international policy spaces and development texts as the ‘imaginary.’ It appears that senior technocrats such as Mr K or cabinet ministers occasionally engaged in the discourse of SSC in these international donor-driven spaces in order to secure national objectives, such as foreign investment promotion in the case of the ToH or expanding energy access in the RETT project. In other words, they approached international development forums and aid negotiations as they would a marketplace where they can purchase development knowledge as a commodity and, as discussed in Chapter Two, transport it back to Zambia through TDC. Their rejection of the institutionalised approach to SSC, specifically the vocabularies employed in Northern policy and academic institutions, led me to reflect on the debates about decolonizing knowledge production and the challenges involved in speaking on behalf of ‘the researched.’ As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012, p.2) argues, “research is a significant site of struggle between the interests and ways of knowing in the West and the interests and ways of resisting of the Other.” This made me question my situatedness in this complex terrain of knowledge production as a ‘Southern’ researcher working in a university located in the global North, and how I could ensure that my research objectively captures the diverse viewpoints that I encountered.

This self-interrogation was further intensified by the fact that many of my informants asked me to produce a brief report on my final findings so that they could understand what they were doing in their projects and what is happening ‘out there’ in terms of South-South/trilateral cooperation. The RETT Project Focal Person at the Ministry of Energy emphasised at the end of our interview that she hoped that I would not forget her request like the other researchers who had come to her institution to get information, but from whom they never heard back (Interview Miss. J, 27 February 2018). This encounter brought me back to Creswell’s (2013, p.34) argument about how qualitative studies informed by an interpretive paradigm should respect their participants and prioritise reciprocity by giving something back. It also resonates with

Cooke and Kothari's (2001) argument that participatory research methods that encourage informants to express their experiences and views but fail to 'empower' them are a form of tyranny. These studies mostly discuss reciprocity in the researcher-informant relationship when studying the lower levels of social stratification, but it is also an important ethical consideration when informants are institutional elites.

My informants essentially asked me to not only extract knowledge but to also 'empower' them by writing a brief feedback report that could possibly help them improve their approach to TDC. Would it be a form of exploitation for me to collect this data and not fulfil their request, especially given that the Zambian government faces capacity weaknesses in the monitoring and reporting of development cooperation? This is a question that has followed me throughout the research process. I intend to produce a policy brief for my Zambian informants and even those informants representing the development cooperation providers. However, informant requests for reciprocity through report writing in order to fill gaps in their own processes (and not material requests) in this study, raise an important ethical consideration that needs to come to the forefront of methodological discussions on qualitative research and should be explored in future studies.

Conclusion

The challenges I encountered in researching the ToH project and the RETT project lead to a number of conclusions. First, TDC projects do not occur in a vacuum, but are intertwined with the domestic political and foreign policy concerns of the beneficiary country and its cooperating partners. These political concerns are usually rendered silent in development texts and policy spaces, which instead tend to concentrate on the more technical aspects of project implementation and partnerships such as its administration or coordination. This appears to be the narrative preferred by the main development institutions/bureaucracies involved in TDC. This brings me to my second conclusion. Perhaps the reason there are only a few empirically-based TDC studies is that, as I have shown in this chapter, it is difficult for researchers to extract information

from key project stakeholders. With the diverse interests at play, full transparency is undesirable and individuals do not want to put their careers at stake by diverging from their institution's desired narrative. However, this chapter has unsettled this narrative and made the case for more studies on South-South/trilateral cooperation to engage with institutional ethnographic approaches, rather than survey-based methods, in order to access beneficiary voices and uncover how power and politics influence partnerships.

An IE methodology has enabled this chapter to cast light on how some Zambian technocrats perceive TDC projects as part of the wider development landscape and not as unique or isolated interventions. It has also shown that senior technocrats perceive the discourse on South-South/trilateral cooperation employed in global policy spaces as an imaginary, but that they engage in this discourse in order to secure their desired outcomes or commodities, which are Southern technologies or knowledge on unique policies and programmes. The next chapter draws on these significant findings on SSC and beneficiary agency to contextualise the ToH project and RETT project within the history of national planning and development cooperation in Zambia. It makes additional contributions to debates on beneficiary agency by demonstrating that there are differences between beneficiary partner perceptions of country ownership and definitions promoted in global policy spaces that concentrate on the need for interventions to be driven by beneficiary demand, leadership and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

4

Contextualising TDC in Zambia

In order to provide a deeper understanding of beneficiary agency and the nature of partnerships in trilateral development cooperation (TDC), this chapter situates two case study projects within the history of Zambia's relationship with its development cooperation providers and national planning. It illustrates how notions of self-reliance and sustainable development in Zambia's development discourse have been influenced by global thinking on modernisation and the roots of dependency-underdevelopment since the 1960s. The chapter also sets out to show that Zambian agency in development partnerships has fluctuated with the stability of its economy and aid dependency, between an overt and less explicit articulation of its development priorities. These explanations set the context for the detailed discussion that follows on how knowledge transfer and country ownership were exercised in the Triangle of Hope (ToH) project and the China-Zambia renewable energy technology transfer (RETT) project. This case study approach is used to demonstrate the ways in which history matters in development cooperation. It shows that even though policy spaces are progressively constructing TDC as a modality that supports equality between all partners, contemporary relations are affected by the legacy of the past. Specifically, the 'neo-colonial' power relations between Northern donors and the Zambian government that were reinforced during the Structural Adjustment era, which forced bureaucrats to develop and institutionalise diverse strategies to resist and manage development cooperation. The chapter makes an important contribution to debates about African agency by demonstrating that one of these strategies has been to avoid taking leadership of the design, implementation, evaluation of interventions, as emphasised in global policy frameworks. Instead, beneficiary partners limit their definition of 'country ownership' to their ability to secure the technologies or development knowledge that they desire and thereafter use these resources to foster self-reliance. In developing the ideas discussed in Chapter Three, this chapter also demonstrates how institutional actors negotiate and contest these different

understandings of ownership, power inequalities, and the real and imagined spaces of international development in order to achieve their goals.

Dependency and self-reliance in the imagination of a better future

Skilled and educated manpower is Zambia's scarcest resource. But hard work, initiative and dedication to development are also important, and something which all of us, whatever our education or training, can offer. And all of us can learn. Our motto must be: "If you know, teach; if you don't know, learn." (President Kenneth Kaunda cited in Cabinet Office 1966, p.3)

Zambia has been preoccupied with 'development' or what can be described as its imagination of a better future, ever since it attained independence from the United Kingdom in 1964. As James Ferguson illustrates in *Expectations of Modernity*, a developed Zambia has always been imagined as a fully industrialised, technologically advanced and urbanised country with modern housing, transport and energy infrastructure, and an educated population with disposable income to spend on consumer goods (Ferguson 1999). Early assessments of Zambia's prospects at achieving this imaginary of development, which had been embedded in British colonial governance and underpinned by modernisation theory, were very promising at independence due to the high revenues generated from the export of its main resource, copper, which positioned it as a middle-income country. In spite of this promise, Zambia's post-colonial economy was hamstrung by a number of constraints which were a result of its dependence almost entirely on copper export earnings, its dual nature, which was defined by urban industrialisation and rural poverty, and the presence of a small manufacturing sector, which forced it to rely on the importation of most goods and services (Cabinet Office 1966; Office of National Development Planning 1966). The most significant challenge to the efforts to address these constraints was the shortage of skilled indigenous labour on independence due to

restrictive colonial policies on education and technical training that prioritised settler communities. This meant, for example, that there were only 100 university graduates and 1,200 secondary school certificate holders. As a result, the main objective of national planning during the country's post-independence years was to correct these imbalances inherited from the colonial era, and thus "establish the conditions for dynamic and sustainable growth" (Office of National Development Planning 1966).

Initial development thinking was fixed primarily on attaining British-style industrial modernity but the Zambian government also adopted some elements of the Soviet economic development model. As McEwan (2019, p.125) points out, this was an approach adopted by most newly independent African countries, inspired as they were by the apparent 'success' of socialism in China and some parts of Latin America. The socialist policies adopted in Zambia included centralised planning with the regular production of 5-year National Development Plans, nationalisation of private enterprises, and the implementation of the import substitution industrialisation (ISI) strategy to diversify the economy away from copper production and expand industrial activity in rural areas (Tordoff and Molteno 1974; Steen 1975). Most of the plans were financed using domestic resources but some financial assistance was also obtained from development cooperation providers to support the construction of large-scale infrastructure projects. Such projects included: the University of Zambia from 1966-9, which was built with some funding from the UK and World Bank; Kafue Gorge hydroelectric power station constructed with Yugoslavia's support from 1969-74; and the TAZARA railway built with China's assistance from 1970-5 (Tordoff and Molteno 1974; Kaluba 1990). Technical cooperation from diverse countries including the UK, United States, Sweden, Germany, USSR, Japan, India, China, and Cuba also supported the government's efforts to enhance human resources development through the provision of overseas university scholarships for degree study, training opportunities for civil servants, and the provision of technical experts to support the local health, agricultural, and education sectors (Alexander 1983; Kaluba 1990).

Human resource development was not able to take place at a rate that could sufficiently fill skilled labour gaps in the civil service and industrial sector and, consequently, the

country had to rely on foreign technical experts to facilitate its national development plans and maintain the functioning of government services (Office of National Development Planning 1966, p.15). As Tordoff and Molteno (1974) point out, this dependency on foreign technical experts, who tended to occupy managerial positions, generated racial tensions and arguments that the country was tolerating a form of neo-colonialism since most experts originated from Europe or neighbouring settler colonies such as Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Subsequently, the government introduced 'Zambianisation' as a strategy to secure self-sufficiency in its skilled labour force, and to increase the numbers of locals employed in the civil service and industrial sector, through investments in education and technical training programs (Cabinet Office 1966). The programme drew on founding President Kenneth Kaunda's teachings on Humanism (a form of African socialism), which promoted the notion that sustainable economic growth and the welfare of all the country's citizens, regardless of race, could only be improved through mutual respect and equal access to socio-economic opportunities (Shaw 1976). These views on equality were also applied to the welfare of people in other countries and influenced policies aimed at supporting pan-Africanist, anti-colonial and transnational solidarity movements that emerged from the 'spirit of Bandung,' such as the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) and the campaign for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) (Shaw 1976; Chan 1992).

Like many other developing countries, notions of self-reliance amongst Zambian political and intellectual elites were also influenced by theories of dependency-underdevelopment put forward by Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin and Walter Rodney. Although there were significant differences with the Latin American context from which it was developed, Chan (1992, p.111) argues that dependency theory appealed to Zambian elites because it neatly explained how the country's integration into the global capitalist economy as a source of copper, its reliance on foreign technical expertise to run its mines, and its reliance on foreign capital markets to trade copper, were all development constraints embedded in colonial governance and not outcomes of their own leadership. However, the appeal of dependency theory was mostly cemented by the mid-1970s global oil crisis, which triggered fluctuations in

the price of copper, a domestic economic recession and a process of de-industrialization that upended Zambia's long-held dreams of attaining self-reliance.

Instead of being able to delink from the global capitalist economy and rely on SSC as proposed by dependency theory, the Zambian government became dependent on financial assistance from Northern-based financial institutions, as the economic recession intensified in the 1980s (see Rakner 2003). At this point development cooperation transformed from being a mechanism that complemented national planning, mostly in the form of technical cooperation, to a source of financial assistance without which the country could not function. Financial assistance from its Northern donors also transformed from having very few conditions – a factor which Fraser (2009, p.309) attributes to their collective sense of 'post-colonial guilt' and a desire to influence Zambia's ideological stance on non-alignment during the height of the Cold War – to being attached to the implementation of the Washington Consensus-based Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The SAP generally encouraged Zambia to reproduce some of the neoliberal economic reforms that appeared to be successful in Western countries, but these policies were not entirely in line with local realities and thereby created a profound economic shock. Most significant were the cuts made to government spending on food subsidies as part of austerity, which sparked widespread public protests for causing food shortages and increasing the cost of living (Rakner 2003). In an attempt to quell public anger, President Kaunda cancelled the SAP in 1987 stating that its policies "had brought pain, malnutrition and death to the people of Zambia" and swiftly replaced it with the locally designed alternative named the New Economic Recovery Programme (NERP (Simutanyi 1996, p.827).

NERP was a symbolic object of resistance against Northern donor interference into the internal affairs of the country since, as Chimhowu *et al.* (2019) point out, national planning enabled post-colonial states to be imaginative about their future and thus was considered an important mark of sovereignty, similar to the respect given to a national flag. As Kaluba (1990, p.27) notes, NERP also articulated a criteria for the type of development cooperation it expected from its Northern donors, with emphasis on

human resources development, which marks it as one of the first times the government made a formal distinction between its Northern and Southern donors. During this period, Southern countries such as Cuba, Egypt, China and India satisfied this criterion by mostly providing support in the form of technical cooperation whilst observing the SSC principles of non-interference and non-conditionality. As a result, SSC activities in Zambia did not attract much public debate or scholarly interest, although studies such as Chan (1992) provide an account of Zambia's support for non-alignment and decolonisation, which as discussed in Chapter Two declined as the Cold War came to end and most countries attained independence. Northern-dominated multilaterals such as the World Bank and IMF, and key bilateral donors such as the UK, United States and Germany responded to the suspension of the SAP by cutting flows of financial assistance. As a consequence, the Zambian economy continued to decline, which forced the cash-strapped Kaunda government to curb its resistance and reinstate the SAP in 1989 (Rakner 2003). Kaunda also agreed to hold the country's first multi-party democratic elections in 1991, which he then lost to Fredrick Chiluba as the domestic economy continued to struggle.

This sequence of events established the disciplinary power of Northern development cooperation in Zambia's development landscape. However, two changes occurred in the Zambian development landscape during the 1990s that are significant for understanding the discussion on the ToH and RETT's projects later in this chapter. First, relations between the Zambian government and Northern donors became tense because donors tended to direct their support to select sectors instead of supporting the priorities set out by the government. Donors also started to assign their technical personnel to lead development projects anchored in government departments, a factor which is now widely criticised for weakening the civil service's capacity to engage in strategic planning²⁰ (Saasa and Carlsson 1996). The biggest source of tension was over how the consistent withdrawal and release of development cooperation continued to act as a disciplinary tool to influence economic policy and good governance reforms.

²⁰ The legacy of this approach on the civil service's capacity to engage in strategic planning will also be discussed further in Chapter Six.

This illustrates Noxolo's (2006, p.261) argument about how the beneficiary country's agency to control the introduction of development interventions became 'hidden' behind the power that Northern donors had to demand compliance to their policy prescriptions during Structural Adjustment. Second, the Chiluba government fervently embraced and promoted the notion that increased trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) would translate into economic growth and the benefits would trickle down to all. However, the expected influx of investments did not materialise, despite the rapid rate with which economic liberalisation was implemented (Fraser 2009). Instead, the economy continued to decline and austerity measures that curbed public spending in the health and education sector reversed some of Zambia's post-independence gains in human development (see Henriot 1997). This led critical observers such as James Ferguson to argue that Zambia is archetypical of how the modernisation school of thought's widely accepted hypothesis, which presents development as a linear progression towards prosperity, is in fact "a myth, an illusion, and even a lie" (Ferguson 1999, p.158).

The outlook on Zambia's development prospects slowly began to improve at the turn of the 21st century when a rise in global commodity prices sparked an economic renaissance that reduced its dependence on financial assistance (Prizzon 2013). As the global debates on aid effectiveness began to intensify, its Northern donors provided debt relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC), which enabled more domestic resources to be channelled towards social spending²¹ (Fraser 2009). The discourse of 'partnership' to describe the donor-beneficiary relationship and 'country ownership' to describe the importance of beneficiary-led development planning in global policy frameworks was also domesticated in national policymaking. The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness also became the main framework guiding Zambia's development partnerships with its Northern partners, although knowledge of the principles remains low amongst bureaucrats outside the Ministry of

²¹ Zambia attained the HIPC completion point in 2005. HIPC is a program that was established by the World Bank and IMF, in collaboration with bilateral agencies and commercial creditors, to restructure the debt burden of a poor country based on an assessment of the efforts it makes to ensure fiscal discipline and poverty reduction.

Finance (MoFNP 2011a). The government also published Zambia's first *Aid Policy and Strategy* where it emphasised that it expected partners to support the actualisation of country ownership by ensuring that all forms of development cooperation are consistent with the goals set out in *Fifth National Development Plan 2006–10* and its long-term strategy *Vision 2030* (MoFNP 2007, p.13). The *Fifth National Development Plan 2006–10* and *Vision 2030* kept Zambia's development trajectory firmly focussed on the neoliberal model of private sector-led economic growth through trade and investments and did not revert to the socialist elements adopted during the early post-colonial years.²² As a result, it received the backing of the country's Northern partners who harmonised their development cooperation programmes into agreement with the plans in a document known as the Joint Assistance Strategy (JASZ) (MoFNP 2011a). The government's space to control national development planning was also expanded by the rise in 'condition free' development cooperation (loans, grants, technical cooperation, military assistance and humanitarian assistance) from Southern partners such as China, India, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Brazil as the global resurgence of SSC began to accelerate (MoF 2012; Prizzon 2013). These Southern partners generally distanced themselves from the JASZ and the Paris Declaration, and it appears the government gave them this concession in order to ensure that they do not change their approach of respecting of non-inference and non-conditionality in development cooperation. Although, it should be noted that Southern development cooperation had always been loosely managed and categorised in policy reports as being separately negotiated and delivered through the 'alternative' framework of SSC (e.g. MoFNP 2010).

Overall, the above changes reverted development cooperation to its post-independence role of addressing persistent gaps in the country's institutional and human resource capacity and the financing of large transport and energy infrastructure projects (Prizzon 2013). Most changes occurred during the presidency of Levy Mwanawasa (2001–8), a period which Hinfelaar and Sichone (2019) note was characterised by an

²² The FNNDP has been succeeded by the Sixth National Development Plan (2011-2015), Revised Sixth National Development Plan (2013-2016) and the Seventh National Development Plan (2017-2021). These plans have continued Zambia's neoliberal development trajectory.

efficient civil service and cordial relations with all of Zambia's development partners. However, as Kragelund (2014) argues, the reduction in aid dependence also reset the hierarchal power relations with Northern partners and made subsequent administrations less diplomatic when resisting donor attempts to use the withdrawal and release of development cooperation as a disciplinary tool. Mwanawasa's successor Rupiah Banda described these actions by donors as "blackmail." He also advised that any country that wanted to withhold their support as a way of influencing his administration's approach to economic management and good governance, "to pack their bags and leave because Zambia was a sovereign state."²³ Consequently, and amidst budgetary pressure in their own countries after the global financial crisis, most Northern partners reduced the scope of their development cooperation whilst the Netherlands and Denmark phased out their bilateral support when the World Bank raised Zambia's economic ranking to lower-middle income in 2011 (de Kemp and Lobbrecht 2016).

In this gap, China has risen to become Zambia's most significant bilateral partner, which in light of its global power, has roused the international community's most significant interest in Zambia's political and development ideologies since the end of the Cold War. This is amid intense debate on whether China's disregard for transparency and accountability considerations in the dispersal of concessional loans for infrastructure development, as part of its policy of 'non-interference,' has contributed to Zambia's growing debt burden and economic instability (Laterza and Mususa 2018). Some actors in the international community are describing China's loans as a form of 'debt-trap diplomacy' aimed at securing strategic assets offered as collateral from defaulting countries, which in the case of Zambia is rumoured to be the state-owned monopoly Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation (ZESCO) (Africa Confidential 2018). Northern countries led by the United States government have expressed concern that China intends to use the debt burden to influence the economic policies of its beneficiaries and build a new economic world order where it will

²³ Times of Zambia (2010b) 'Don't Blackmail Us, Banda Tells Donors', *Times of Zambia*; Phiri, P. (2010) 'RB Tells Off Nosy Donors', *Times of Zambia*.

dominate (Bolton 2018; Perdue 2018). As discussed in Chapter Two, these debates are part of attempts by Northern governments to fight the ‘dewesternization’ that the rise of the BRICS have triggered in the global political economy, and to re-establish the legitimacy of Western capitalism, industrial modernity and democratic governance as the best option for developing countries (Mignolo 2012). However, as Laterza and Mususa (2018) point out, if China’s attempts to use development cooperation to institute a new economic order are successful, then this would only mirror the World Bank and IMF’s success at advancing the expansion of neoliberalism through the SAP.

At present China is enabling developing countries to delink from the global North’s power to influence their political and economic decision-making, but it is also evolving into another hegemonic force of power, and is thereby working against decolonization. Chapter Five demonstrates that China is already, directly and indirectly, influencing the actions of bureaucrats in Zambia. Nevertheless, Zambia’s engagement with China and other Southern partners is not as ideologically driven as it was during the Kaunda era. Instead, the government’s extensive procurement of infrastructure loans is more related to its desire to project a visible sign of ‘development’ and secure its political viability with the electorate. This indicates that modernisation is still the dominant frame of thought amongst political elites; however, elements of dependency theory are still prominent. For instance, ‘Zambianisation’ re-emerged in national debates on the use of foreign labour during the leadership of populist president Michael Sata (2011–4). Although under Sata Zambianisation evolved into a nationalistic concept that encourages the notion that only Zambian nationals and not foreign technical experts are genuinely committed to ensuring equitable and sustainable development (Lusaka Times 2011a). Sata also pushed for development cooperation to support capacity building and technology transfer in a way that progressively reduces the reliance on foreign technical expertise in specialist areas (Lusaka Times 2012).

The *Zambia Aid Policy and Strategy* stresses that the government expects technical cooperation (which includes the provision of policy advice, project implementation and capacity building) to be demand-driven and the government should have control

over its targeting and monitoring so that it is in line with national priorities (MoFNP 2007). The government has not provided clear guidelines on how this can be realised in any other documents nor has it articulated an official strategy for managing South-South/trilateral cooperation. However, the development experiences of East Asian countries have recently emerged as an important source of inspiration and basis for trilateral cooperation.

The emergence of TDC

Zambia's move towards trilateral cooperation started with discussions in international forums such as the 3rd Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), a space in which Japan presented technical cooperation from Asian countries as a mechanism for enhancing human resources development and economic growth in Africa (MOFA 2003). TICAD also emphasised that such South-South/trilateral cooperation would only be based on African-driven initiatives, which appealed to the Zambian desire for ownership of and leadership in development partnerships. This subsequently encouraged the Mwanawasa administration to seek Japanese support to transfer knowledge on trade and investment promotion from Malaysia in the Triangle of Hope project in 2005 (Jegathesan and Ono 2008). The interest in learning from the economic development experiences of Asian countries was also boosted by the renewal of commitments to South-South cooperation at the 2005 Africa-Asia Summit in Bandung, Indonesia in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the 1955 conference.²⁴ Statements in national development plans suggest that the interest in Asian technical cooperation has been motivated by a sense of shame at the realisation that Zambia had a significantly higher per capita income than countries such as South Korea, Thailand and Malaysia in 1964, but the socio-economic development of these countries had advanced far beyond it by the turn of

²⁴ See Saluseki, B. (2005) 'There Are Lessons to Learn from Asia's Economic Success - Levy', *The Post*; Kaimana, G. (2005) 'South to South Tips on Economic Growth Come to Zambia', *Times of Zambia*.

the century (GRZ 2006, p.15; MNDP 2017, p.34). After failed attempts at reproducing British industrial modernity through socialist policies and Washington Consensus model of neoliberalism, the rapid development of these Asian countries seems to have also generated a sense of hope that Zambia's long-held dream of a better 'modern' future is not entirely implausible. Research studies commissioned by multilateral agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Africa Development Bank (AfDB) have also been influential in getting policymakers to 'look east' for their development inspiration (e.g. SAIPAR 2015). This is in line with the general African gaze on development shifting from the experiences of Western countries to Asia, but as seen from Chapter Two, it is also a response to that gaze being returned by Japan, China and South Korea with the goal of cementing East Asian economic development models as alternatives to the Washington Consensus (Osei-Hwedie and Osei-Hwedie 2010).

It is against this context that the next section of this chapter draws on key stakeholder interviews, project documents and newspaper archives to examine how the much sought after knowledge on East Asian industrial modernity has been transferred to Zambia through the ToH and RETT projects. It discusses the links between these projects and the country's long-term goals of achieving economic growth and self-reliance, and differences between how beneficiary partners exercise ownership in these projects and the indicators in effective development cooperation frameworks.

The Triangle of Hope (ToH) investment promotion project

The Triangle of Hope (ToH) is a technical cooperation project between Zambia and Japan that was implemented between 2006 and 2012 with the support of Malaysian partners. The main aim of the project was to facilitate the transfer of knowledge on Malaysia's experience transitioning from a resource-dependent economy to a diversified upper-middle income economy, with a specific focus on the policies and legislation it employed to create a conducive environment for increased trade, investments and industrial production. The economic structure of post-colonial

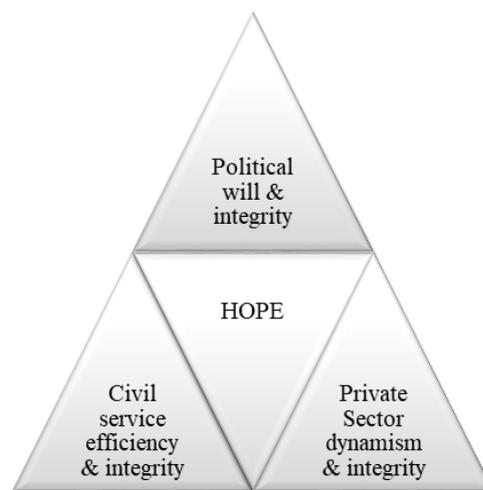
Malaysia when it attained independence in 1957 was similar to that of Zambia in that it relied on the export of primary commodities such as tin, rubber and palm oil. However, Malaysia was able to transform its economy into a regional powerhouse during the 1970s and 1980s through the development of an investment-driven electronics manufacturing sector (Jegathesan and Ono 2008). Like many East Asian countries, its ‘economic miracle’ was influenced by Japanese technical assistance and involved the replication of some aspects of Japan’s development trajectory. Subsequently, starting from the 1980s, Japan supported Malaysia’s South-South technical cooperation programmes to facilitate the further transfer of these policy experiences to developing countries. However, as Shimoda (2012) notes, the Malaysian government only began to explore opportunities to formally engage in trilateral development cooperation with African countries after Japan hosted TICAD III in 2003.

To facilitate TDC, a conceptual framework known as the ‘Triangle of Hope’ was developed by Malaysian technical expert Dato J. Jegathesan and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).²⁵ As illustrated by Figure 5, this framework was centred on the key principles credited with supporting Malaysia’s industrial modernity: political will, civil service efficiency and private sector dynamism. These principles emphasise the need for politicians and civil servants to prioritise national development over political inclinations or opportunities for personal enrichment, and the growth of a vibrant and independent private sector that could complement national development plans (Jegathesan and Ono 2008, p.212). According to Shimoda (2012), Jegathesan then presented a proposal for Malaysia-Zambia knowledge transfer based on the Triangle of Hope framework to the Minister of Finance and National Planning. Malaysia’s development experience was embraced and considered valuable to Zambia since, as discussed previously, economic diversification is an unfulfilled national development goal the country has attempted to address since independence. The Triangle of Hope framework also aligned with plans to improve the business and

²⁵ Dato Jegathesan is a former Deputy Director-General of the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA).

investment climate through regulatory reform, as part of the private sector development (PSD) agenda the government had adopted from its Northern cooperation providers (MoFNP 2006). Evidence that state intervention contributed to the Malaysian economic miracle also validated arguments against the push within the Washington Consensus for the rolling back and supported the Zambian government's desire to "reposition the country as a developmental state" (MNDP 2017). According to the ToH Project Coordinator, the Triangle of Hope framework also aligned with the then President Levy Mwanawasa's personal desire to produce "a national development framework that could re-engineer the management of the economy" (Interview, 17 January 2018). As a result, the Triangle of Hope proposal was well received by President Mwanawasa and his cabinet members.

Figure 5: The Triangle of Hope



Source: Shimoda (2012)

In order to uphold Japan's policy of only supporting 'African owned and led' initiatives, President Mwanawasa had to formally ask Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi for Japanese technical assistance to facilitate this exchange. Thereafter, a technical cooperation agreement for a project known as 'Strategic Action Initiative for

Economic Development' (ToH-SAIED) was signed in June 2006 between the Japanese and Zambian governments (Shimoda 2012). According to Mr K, President Mwanawasa had such a strong interest in ensuring its success that the project became anchored at State House. In addition, the President's Special Assistant for Economic Affairs, Minister of Finance and National Planning and senior officials from Cabinet Office all had significant influence over the project design, although the main implementing institutions were the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry (MCTI) and Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) (Interview with ToH Banking and Finance taskforce member, 28 February 2018). Jegathesan and Ono (2008) note that Japan limited itself to the role of a knowledge broker by contracting Dato Jegathesan and additional Malaysian technical experts to facilitate knowledge transfer and capacity building as part of the project team. As a result, the ToH is considered a project that was driven by the demands of the Zambian government rather than a project that was initiated by its partners.

Knowledge transfer

The ToH was transformed from a conceptual framework into a strategy that could transport Malaysia's development experiences to the Zambian landscape through three measures: policy reform workshops, foreign investment promotion missions and capacity development workshops. Policy reform workshops concentrated on revising the terms of reference created by the Malaysian technical expert, which contained policy and regulatory changes that Zambia could make to stimulate investment-driven growth in twelve economic sectors. Many of these recommendations built on older sectorial action plans such as the development of an air cargo hub that the Zambian government had previously experienced difficulties in realising (Interview with ToH Project Coordinator, 17 January 2018). This ensured that the project aligned with the government's vision and development priorities. According to Jegathesan and Ono (2008), country ownership was further supported in two ways. First, the President was given responsibility for appointing members to the twelve sectorial tasks forces covering: banking and finance, cotton, mining, multi-facility economic zones

(MFEZ), small and medium enterprises (MSME), agriculture, education, health, tourism, air cargo hub and inland ports, information communication technology (ICT), and the streamlining of the government machinery.²⁶ Second, the task forces adopted, modified or rejected the recommendations, which were consolidated into 12 Action Plans for associated line ministries to mainstream, but it was agreed that “ownership of an idea would belong to the taskforce, and not the Malaysian expert, once any recommendation was accepted” (Jegathesan and Ono 2008, p.223).

After setting the foundation for an improved investment climate through these reforms, a Zambian delegation (comprising bureaucrats and private sector business representatives) used foreign investment promotion missions to Malaysia, India, Thailand, Bangladesh, South Korea and Japan to promote the country as an ideal investment destination (Interview with ToH Project Coordinator, 17 January 2018). The Malaysian government did not have a formal role in the ToH project, but its external trade and industrial development agencies did organise missions for its private sector to explore investment opportunities in Zambia (Shimoda 2012). The second phase of the Triangle of Hope known as ‘Zambia Investment Promotion project’ (ZIPP-ToH) was agreed to address the institutional and human resource capacity weaknesses at the Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) in August 2009, which at the time was a new institution established through the merger of five trade/investment-related institutions.²⁷ Knowledge transfer was achieved through a series of capacity development workshops held to address areas such as inter-governmental communication and coordination, information provision and service delivery to the private sector clients, and general administration (JICA 2012).

²⁶ Each taskforce comprised focal persons from an associated line ministry, a stakeholder from the private sector and/or an academic. See Figure 3 for project management structure.

²⁷ Zambia Privatization Agency, Zambia Export Processing Zones Authority, Export Promotion Board, and the Small Enterprise Development Board.

Sustainability of development outcomes

The Triangle of Hope project's overall objectives of increasing FDI from Malaysia and other Asian countries, increasing domestic investments and the strengthening of ZDA's investment promotion capacity improvement were all achieved during the period of project implementation between 2006 and 2012 (JICA 2012; JICA 2017). Specific outcomes from the 12 ToH Action Plans include the production of a master plan for multi-facility economic zones (MFEZs); an increase in domestic private sector investments in the education and health sectors; the expansion of the air cargo hub at Lusaka International Airport; the digitization of government services; and the expansion of road infrastructure nation-wide (Interview with ToH Project Coordinator, 17 January 2018). When asked the reason behind the successful implementation of these policies, most informants credited the strong ownership displayed by senior government leadership. President Mwanawasa and members of his Cabinet described the Triangle of Hope as a "development model" that could help Zambia replicate Malaysia's success story, rather than a mere technical cooperation project (for example, see Lusaka Times 2009). However, Shimoda (2012, p.140) observed that the strict top-down nature of the ToH project management structure undermined feelings of ownership among line ministry officials, and it appears that this may have had an impact on the continued implementation of the 12 ToH Action Plans after the project closed.

The Michael Sata-led government, which came to power on a populist mandate following elections in 2011, made repeated policy and legislative changes in areas such as such taxation, which created persistent uncertainty and a plunge in investor confidence, thereby reversing ToH gains made in creating a stable investment climate (Rakner 2017). The civil service's agency to engage in strategic policy planning also became constrained by President Sata and senior officials in the governing political party, through intimidation and/or dismissal of dissenting voices (Simutanyi and Hinfelaar 2018). National policymaking has continued to be a contested terrain, which has left line ministry officials with little incentives to continue monitoring and evaluating previously planned policies (see Hinfelaar and Sichone 2019). This would

explain the reason why JICA's ex-post project evaluation found that the 12 ToH Action Plans have been shelved and current staff at Cabinet Office, ZDA and MCTI have very little knowledge about the Triangle of Hope (Interview with Mr H, JICA Programme Officer, 5 February 2018). As discussed in Chapter Three, I also had difficulty in finding interviewees at MCTI or ZDA. Most significantly, in spite of its many positive outcomes, I found that the ToH is now generally known as the project that resulted in the development of multi-facility economic zones (MFEZs).²⁸ This indicates that the Triangle of Hope evolved within a decade, from a transformative model aimed at replicating the East Asian economic miracle, to a relic of one of Zambia's many attempts at achieving economic diversification and overcoming its colonial legacy of a dependence on copper exports.

China-Zambia renewable energy technology transfer (RETT) project

The RETT project is a trilateral cooperation initiative implemented from 2014 to 2019 in a partnership involving China, Zambia, Denmark and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The main aim of the project was to facilitate the transfer of knowledge on how China was able to expand energy access to rural areas through renewable energy technologies during its economic transformation in the 1990s and 2000s (UNDP 2014). The origins of the RETT project are similar to the ToH project in the sense that it emerged from a Northern cooperation providers plans to support a Southern partner to share its development experiences, in an area the Northern cooperation provider had originally provided technical cooperation. More specifically, Denmark provided funding for UNDP China to carry out a pilot study in 2012 of the potential for China-Africa SSC on renewable energy technology transfer, following years of China benefiting from Danish bilateral cooperation in the renewable energy sector (Danida 2014b). The findings from the pilot study were then

²⁸ MFEZ are special industrial parks/free trade zones aimed at supporting domestic and export-oriented industries. For an example of how the Triangle of Hope project is discussed in relation to MFEZ see Mseteka, E. (2017) 'Government makes strides in economic zones but...', *Zambia Daily Mail*.

used to formulate a proposal for a South-South/trilateral cooperation project that would improve local knowledge of and capacity to operate/maintain renewable energy technologies that could provide off-grid solutions for rural Zambia. It was also proposed that the project would facilitate the reform of institutional and regulatory frameworks in the energy sector, so as to increase private sector involvement (UNDP 2014).

The RETT project's goal of improving energy access in rural areas addresses yet another legacy of colonial governance that Zambia has struggled to overcome. As Tordoff and Molteno (1974) point out, investments in energy infrastructure along with industrial activity, urban housing, and transport infrastructure were mostly limited to areas that aligned with the production and export of copper in the colonial economy. Post-colonial administrations made rural electrification a national development priority, but plans to expand the national electricity grid to rural areas were often constrained by a shortage of specialist technical capacity and financial resources, especially during Structural Adjustment (MoFNP 2006). As a result, most of Zambia's rural population has historically relied on wood fuel to meet their energy needs. The economic renaissance the country experienced after 2000 created space for the Mwanawasa-led government to increase investments in energy infrastructure, in line with plans for achieving economic diversification and visions of industrial modernity. A target for increasing rural energy access from 3% to at least 50% was set in national development plans, in line with the commitments to ensuring access to clean and affordable energy in the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and subsequently the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (GRZ 2006; MoFNP 2011b). However, progress in closing the energy gap was initially slow until climatic changes disrupted the production and distribution of electricity from large hydropower plants, which pushed the government to loosen its monopoly of the energy sector and encourage more private sector involvement.

Consequently, the RETT project proposal was accepted when presented to the Zambian government through the Ministry of Energy (MOE). However, key informants indicate that they consider the RETT project an externally driven initiative

instead of a project driven by the demands of the Zambian government as the beneficiary partner. The project plan was initially designed by UNDP Zambia and then revised by representatives from the Zambian, Chinese and Danish governments in Beijing, who became the project's Global Steering Committee (Interview with Mr A, UNDP Zambia RETT Project focal person, 17 September 2019). The project was formally launched in September 2014 as the China-Zambia South-South cooperation on renewable energy technology transfer project, with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs providing the project finances and the UNDP China and Zambia country offices managing overall the project coordination and administration. While the technology transfer process was managed by the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology's Administrative Centre for China's Agenda 21 (ACCA21) and the Zambian the Ministry of Energy (MOE). In addition, the RETT project document emphasises that project management units were established in each agency in order to ensure national ownership and the sustainability of the project outcomes after its completion (UNDP 2014, p.28).

Knowledge transfer

Technology and skills transfer in the RETT project was facilitated through three mechanisms: foreign exchange trips/matchmaking events, capacity building workshops, and the creation of centres of excellence. According to UNDP (2014, p. 28), the implementation of project activities was managed by a project management unit (PMU) within ACCA21 in China and another within the MOE in Zambia as a way of ensuring local ownership of the project and its outcomes. The first phase of project activities involved a Zambian delegation travelling to China on foreign exchange trips, and vice-versa, to engage in partnership meetings so that a common understanding of the technology transfer process could be established. The delegation included officials from the: Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation (ZESCO), Rural Electrification Authority (REA), University of Zambia (UNZA), Kafue Gorge Regional Training Centre (KGRTC) and some independent renewable energy entrepreneurs. Foreign exchange trips or what were described as 'matchmaking

events’ were also held in Beijing, Chengdu and Chongqing to enable Chinese research institutions and private businesses to showcase renewable energy technologies (solar, biomass, small hydropower, wind power, animal waste-to-energy) and to establish partnerships with Zambian stakeholders (Interview with Mr B, RETT Project Manager, 22 September 2017). One of the outcomes of this ‘matchmaking’ was that KGRTC signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on small hydropower with China’s International Centre for Small Hydro Power (ICSHP), while Poly Solar Technologies Beijing Ltd committed itself to donating solar photovoltaics equipment to UNZA. These processes led the project to select solar energy and small hydropower as the most appropriate technologies for transfer to Zambia.

Figure 6: RETT project sites in Zambia



(Source: modified from Wikimedia Commons 2015, File: Zambia_location_map.svg)

Subsequently, the focal point of the RETT project became the creation of centres of excellence in solar energy and small hydropower which would then be tasked with disseminating knowledge on these renewable energy technologies locally. The Department of Physics at UNZA and KGRTC were selected as the sites for the solar energy and small hydropower centres of excellence, respectively, because the institutions already had relevant technical expertise but wanted to expand their know-how and training facilities. According to the RETT Project Manager, this approach to site selection was taken in order to enhance beneficiary partners commitment to the project's objectives and ensure that country ownership is strengthened (Interview, 22 September 2017). Capacity building workshops on the planning and construction of a small hydropower plant led by Chinese partners from the International Centre for Small Hydro Power (ICSHP) were also held as part of efforts to establish the centre of excellence. Finally, policy reform workshops involving relevant energy sector stakeholders in Zambia were held and produced recommendations on the policy and legislative changes that could remove barriers to private sector participation in the production and distribution of renewable energy technologies, which was the RETT's project's second objective (UNDP 2018).

Sustainability of development outcomes

The RETT project's objective of establishing a centre of excellence for the local transfer of knowledge on solar energy was achieved with the centre's official launch at UNZA in November 2018. Linkages between the centre and other development projects managed by UNDP and the Ministry of Energy have been established in order to ensure that the centre contributes to closing the energy gap. For example, the centre will train technicians on the installation/maintenance of solar energy systems technologies as part of UNDP's Solar for Health initiative to ensure that rural health clinics have a stable source of electricity (Interview RETT Project Focal Person-UNDP Zambia, 17 September 2017). It has also supported the development of a teaching curriculum in solar energy technologies for use at UNZA and national technical-vocational training institutes countrywide. The centre's PMU has stated that

it plans to cultivate industry partnerships and turn the centre into a ‘one-stop-shop’ for all solar energy training and consultancy services as a way of ensuring the sustainability of its operations (Interview solar energy centre of excellence Project Manager, 30 January 2018). However, it appears that the top-down structure of the RETT project generally weakened feelings of ownership amongst implementing partners in Zambia, similar to experiences in the Triangle of Hope project. For example, the solar energy centre of excellence Project Manager asserted that his team did not care about RETT project activities beyond the solar energy centre and, as a result, they did not make efforts to attend most National Steering Committee planning meetings nor did they read most of the quarterly reports generated by UNDP (Interview 30 January 2018). However, he conceded that one of the negative outcomes of his team not attending steering committee meetings was that bureaucrats, who lacked technical knowledge of what is involved in constructing energy infrastructure, allocated insufficient funds to the centre in the project budget.

Figure 7: Solar energy centre of excellence construction site, January 2018



(Source: Author)

The construction of a small hydropower demonstration plant, which is set to be the centrepiece of the KGRTC centre of excellence and a source of electricity for 15,000 people surrounding its rural locality in Serenje district, had not begun at the time I was conducting fieldwork. Various reasons, such as a budget shortfall and complex procurement procedures were cited as the reason for the delay. Nevertheless, the delay in its construction also led to an extension to the RETT project timeline from its original end date of August 2018 to late 2019 (Interview RETT Project Manager, 22 September 2017). It is difficult to predict the long-term impact the centres of excellence will have on developing local capacity on renewable energy technologies. However, the RETT project was a significant test case for Chinese participation in TDC involving an OECD-DAC member which is something it had previously avoided due to ideological differences. The RETT project also marked Denmark's re-entry in the Zambian development landscape after it had, alongside other Northern cooperation providers, phased out bilateral cooperation in 2011 when Zambia's economy had improved and tensions with the government were high.²⁹

One of Denmark's interests in funding the RETT project was to help the Chinese government improve its human and institutional capacity to share knowledge on renewable energies through SSC, manage social-cultural differences with beneficiary partners and engage in multiple stakeholder development projects (UNDP 2014; Danida 2014b). As a result, the project's third objective was to ensure that RETT project management unit at ACCA21 institutionalises the main lessons it has learnt on transferring renewable energy technologies to African countries from the project in Zambia and another parallel project in Ghana (Interview with RETT Programme Manager-UNDP China, 7 September 2018). It has now become the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology's South-South centre of excellence in renewable energy technology transfer and has already moved on to replicate the RETT model in a trilateral cooperation project in Ethiopia with the UNDP (UNDP 2019). This approach to 'scaling-up the impact' of a South-South/trilateral cooperation initiative is not

²⁹ Denmark's re-emergence in the Zambian development landscape will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

unique to China and matches the general trend other development cooperation providers such as Japan are employing (see Hosono 2013). This would suggest, as observers such as Han (2017) and Zhang (2017) have argued, that the Chinese government is using its participation in TDC projects to improve the effectiveness of its development cooperation and to reinvent its global image from ‘rogue’ actor to a responsible development partner. However, it also indicates that the Chinese model for expanding energy access is set to play an even bigger role in Africa’s development landscape in the near future.

Exploring beneficiary views on country ownership of TDC

The ToH and RETT projects are two different development interventions in terms of their scale, focus and links to national planning. However, it is clear from the above discussion, that the Zambian government is using TDC as a vehicle for transporting policies, programmes and technologies that it considers valuable from other Southern countries and can help it achieve its long-held desire for industrial modernity. The main vehicles of cooperation that have facilitated this process are (i) capacity building workshops; (ii) policy and legislative reform workshops; (iii) foreign exchange trips/matchmaking events to link private sectors businesses in partner countries; and (iv) the development of centres of excellence with specialist knowledge in particular fields. These mechanisms have resulted in varied outcomes in each project but, overall, have enabled the government to address specific human and institutional capacity gaps. As discussed in Chapter Three, global policy frameworks on effective development cooperation would argue that the effectiveness of these interventions and the sustainability of their outcomes is reliant on their having been driven by beneficiary demand, leadership (over their planning, implementation and evaluation) and consultative multi-stakeholder partnerships. Table 2 provides a breakdown of project activities according to these principles:

Table 2: Overview of country ownership findings

Principle	Indicator	ToH project	RETT project
Demand-driven	Partner(s) who identified the development need or initiated the project.	GRZ made a formal request to Japan for technical support after Malaysian consultant proposed an exchange based on the ToH framework.	UNDP China and Denmark initiated the project. GRZ accepted the proposal because project goals aligned with local development priorities.
	The proportion of project design based on preferences of Zambian government (GRZ) or development cooperation providers.	GRZ used the ToH to refine and implement pre-existing sectorial development plans. Senior government officials had a major role in project design.	Each partner had the opportunity to give input on the plan. UNDP Zambia was more assertive than GRZ representatives.
Multiple stakeholders	The extent to which non-state actors participate in project planning/implementation.	Line ministry officials, academics and private sector business associations mainly included in implementation i.e. participating in 12 ToH taskforces and capacity training.	Line ministry officials, academics and private sector businesses mainly included in project implementation i.e. capacity training and centres of excellence
Partnership	The presence of common understanding on the partnership model, country ownership and project goals.	Yes, Zambia takes lead in planning, financing, and implementation. Malaysia provides development knowledge and Japan acts as a facilitator.	Project goals clear but ownership vague in the project plan. Consequently, partners have different understandings.
	The extent to which competition and/or cooperation shapes relations between partners.	Japan-Zambia relations have traditionally been positive. Japan reducing ODA but increasing technical cooperation and interested in increasing trade/investments.	Importance of China-Zambia economic and diplomatic relationship had an impact on stakeholders approach to partnership.
Beneficiary leadership	Government strategy for negotiating with partners and managing TDC.	Very strong and guided by national plans.	Less explicit and not seen as a priority by some local stakeholders as long as desired outcomes attained.

Even though global policy frameworks on effective development cooperation emphasise the importance of beneficiary demand, leadership and consultative multi-stakeholder partnerships (as detailed in the above table), some of the opinions expressed by Zambian technocrats suggest that they have different views on how important these principles are in their exercise of country ownership and management of TDC. Therefore, before proceeding to a discussion of how the politics of partnership supports or undermines Zambian ownership of TDC in Chapter Five, it is first necessary to analyse the ways of knowing and understanding the idea of country ownership from the perspective of those involved in both projects.

Who voices the development concern?

Postcolonial critiques of development cooperation highlight the importance of creating space in which the subaltern or marginalised can be a part of the process that defines a development need or problem and the type of intervention (policy, programme or project) that can be employed to address that need. As McEwan (2019, p.294) points out, a postcolonial approach can help to overcome inequality by opening up spaces for the agency of people in the global South through asking questions such as “who voices the development concern, what power relations are played out, and how do local or global identities and structural roles shape priorities.” Perceptions of country ownership in effective development cooperation frameworks tend to limit their focus to the question of who voiced the development concern and recommend that development interventions should be driven by the demands of the beneficiary partner. A comparison of experiences in the two case studies suggests that demand-driven and the externally driven TDC projects do indeed generate different levels of interest and commitment from the beneficiary partner. The ToH project was an internally driven initiative, which generated strong interest and commitment from the President and senior government officials during both its planning and implementation phase because it enabled the government to refine and implement pre-existing plans aimed at supporting economic diversification. In contrast, stakeholders at the Ministry of Energy and UNZA repeatedly referred to the RETT project as an “external project

started by UNDP China and Denmark,” and this view of it being an external intervention appears to have negatively affected Zambian participation during the planning stage.

According to the UNDP Zambia Project Focal Person, government representatives did not assert their preferences at the initial RETT project appraisal meetings with the GSC in Beijing, even though they were afforded plenty of space to negotiate, and it took some urging from the UNDP to get them to voice their opinions (Interview with Mr A, 17 September 2017). The RETT Project Focal Person went to state that UNDP institutionalized the RETT project management unit (PMU) into the Ministry of Energy and gave its Director authority to direct project activities and the disbursements of project funds, in order to stimulate Zambian commitment and participation in the implementation of the project. However, he emphasised that the UNDP Zambia held the funds in its accounts for “safekeeping to protect against misuse or re-directing of funds to other government projects.” This appears to contradict agreements on country ownership in the Paris Declaration that require development cooperation providers to use the finance systems of the beneficiary country (MoFNP 2011a). The idea that the Zambian government cannot be trusted with project finances can be traced back to age-old tropes about the inadequacy of African partners (as discussed in studies such as Crewe and Harrison 1998). Recent corruption scandals involving the misappropriation of donor funds meant for social welfare and infrastructure projects have further reinforced these notions³⁰ (BBC 2018). Nevertheless, UNDP’s strategy appears to have succeeded as it was observed that the Zambian ambassador in Beijing actively participated in the GSC and verbally expressed the government’s commitment to ensuring that the RETT project goals were achieved (Interview RETT Project Manager, 22 September 2017).

The fact that the RETT project was initiated and financed by UNDP, China and Denmark clearly created a power imbalance that gave them ownership over the overall

³⁰ Northern cooperation provider’s suspended aid funding in 2009-10 after it was discovered that finances meant for healthcare sector had been embezzled, and again in 2018 when funds aimed at supporting social cash transfer programmes were misused

project objectives, while Zambian beneficiaries simply agreed to the implementation of these objectives because they aligned with domestic plans. However, a significant finding on beneficiary agency is that the Zambian government does not simply accept any South-South/trilateral development cooperation proposal from its partners, which is a risk previous studies have cautioned against (e.g. Kragelund 2014, p.158). There is a linkage between a TDC proposal's chances of progressing into a tangible project and the beneficiary's vision on how progress in a specific sector can be achieved. For example, it could be assumed that the Zambian government accepted the RETT project proposal from its partners because it aligned with national plans to expand rural energy access. However, a 2008 UNIDO-funded tour of the Brazilian biofuels industry aimed at encouraging SSC between Latin American and African countries, resulted in a proposal for TDC on biofuels production involving Zambia, Brazil and UNIDO that was not accepted (see Mulenga and Sinkala 2008). This project could have also contributed to closing the energy gap through bioethanol production from local crops such as cassava, but it did not get past the exploratory stage because the Ministry of Energy's interest in biofuels development declined due to political lobbying from fossil fuel companies and concerns that it could harm food security by changing the use of agricultural land to cash crop production (Interview with Mr F, Renewable Energy Specialist, 18 January 2018). The politics of energy access in Zambia is complex and its impact on country ownership of the RETT project is discussed further in Chapter Five. However, this example demonstrates the Zambian government accepted the RETT project proposal because it aligned with its specific interest in expanding energy access through solar energy and hydropower technologies. Overall, this also underscores that beneficiary country perspectives on how a development need can be addressed are not static.

Ownership for self-reliance

As discussed in Chapter Two, postcolonial scholars have criticised assumptions that actors from global North are the 'knowers' and those from the global South are the 'learners' in international development. These assumptions are now being replicated

in SSC and problematizing the notion that South-South relations are based on horizontality and mutual learning. However, the Zambian case illustrates that the relationship between power and knowledge is often much more complex, especially from the perspective of those at the upper levels of power. First of all, the statement quoted at the beginning of this chapter demonstrates that the Zambian government has historically aimed to ‘learn’ from others and use technical cooperation to rectify the country’s lack of skilled labour and its reliance on foreign technical experts in the civil service and industrial sector, which is legacy of restrictive colonial education policies. Second, Zambian stakeholders in the ToH and RETT projects explicitly expressed a desire to learn from their Malaysian and Chinese partner’s experiences. For example, when discussing the benefits of drawing from China’s experience the UNDP Zambia Project Focal Person stated:

We have been able to identify policy barriers and gaps by learning from other countries with similar experiences. For example, there was a Chinese colleague who was working with me in the office here for almost 8 months at the beginning of the project. When we [Zambians] identified gaps and came up with possible solutions, he would be able to advise us by saying, “We also found this problem in China but this solution did not work, try XYZ instead.” This saved us time and effort. (Interview, 7 September 2017)

Malaysia and China’s development experiences were also used to refine and implement pre-existing development plans, which essentially turned these pivotal partners into cost-effective blueprints of how to use FDI and expanded energy access to spur industrial modernity. According to Ms J, the Zambian government specifically accepted the RETT proposal because it aligned closely with national plans on expanding rural electrification and it is perceived that local capacity development in renewable energy technologies can reduce Zambia’s dependence on expensive foreign experts to construct and maintain energy infrastructure in the future (Interview with Ministry of Energy RETT PMU member, 27 February 2018). This notion of using technical cooperation to foster self-reliance can also be seen in statements from members of the solar energy centre excellence PMU:

I don't know who the geniuses behind this project are, but I am not really bothered to find out as long as we have gotten what we wanted out of this, which is our solar laboratory. (Interview solar energy centre of excellence Project Manager, 30 January 2018)

We have owned this project because we have gotten the knowledge on solar that we wanted and we are now experts who will train other people. We now have a laboratory with equipment and solar modules from this project that will remain with us in this department. We are going to charge fees for training sessions once the solar energy lab starts operating and hopefully this will help us to maintain the lab. (Interview with members of solar energy centre excellence PMU, 25 September 2017)

This 'getting what we want' definition of country ownership may appear simplistic, but as Abdenur (2019, p.35) points out, it is important for studies in international relations to open up to new vocabularies and conceptual definitions if they are to adequately capture the ways of knowing in South-South cooperation. These statements demonstrate that some beneficiary partners interpret country ownership as their ability to secure the development knowledge or technologies that they desired from an intervention, and to thereafter use these resources to foster self-reliance. Members of the solar energy centre excellence PMU also brought into question arguments for consultative multi-stakeholder partnerships instead of 'government-owned and led' TDC projects (see GPEDC 2016), by asserting that they were not concerned with playing a leading role in the planning and implementation of the RETT project as long as they were able to get the solar centre built. Similar sentiments on ownership of the ToH project were expressed by a member of the ToH Health taskforce who insisted that, "We at the project level didn't care what happened with planning at the ToH steering committee level, we [at the Ministry of Health] were just interested in what we could get from the project which was a health diagnostics centre" (Interview with Mr I, 13 February 2018). This would partially explain Shimoda's (2012) observation

of the differing levels of commitment between senior government officials/steering committee members and line ministry officials in the ToH. However, when asked for his views on these differences, the JICA Programme Officer, who happens to be a Zambian national, offered a different perspective:

There was a difference in participation. This is true. One of the reasons was that a lot of the senior leaders had a desire to create change. There was more participation from the top. While some of the line ministry officials viewed project activities as an extra responsibility/commitment from their day-to-day work. I have seen this same bad attitude in our [JICA] current project on KAIZEN. Most government officials have no interest in progress. Most government officials only work when senior leadership pushes them. There is a need for a change in the mind-set of how people approach their work. (Interview, 5 February 2018)

Frustration with beneficiary passivity was also expressed by the UNDP Zambia Project Focal Person, who stated that his organisation often tells the government to come up with a strategy for how they can get what they want before entering into aid negotiations “but sometimes they just go in there and ask the donor what do you want us to do” (Interview, 17 September 2017). When taken at face value it would be reasonable to interpret the above observations, by two actors who have the dual identity of being both Zambian nationals and representatives of the development cooperation provider, as a further evidence of how pervasive stereotypes about the inadequacy of the ‘passive’, ‘dis-organised’ and ‘lazy’ beneficiary are in international development cooperation (Crewe and Harrison 1998; Baaz 2005). Their statements can also be seen to validate claims that the Zambian government struggles with human/institutional capacity weaknesses. The latter is a factor the ToH Project Coordinator acknowledged and suggested could be mitigated if national development plans were more detailed so that civil servants would have a better idea of specific national interests when entering aid negotiation meetings with development partners (Interview, 17 January 2018). However, instead of deficit theorizing like the other officials, the ToH Project Coordinator also suggested that failure is not always failure:

The reason donor reports often cite policymakers or government institutions as lacking capacity is because there is a mismatch between donor plans or ideas for the [beneficiary] country outlined in their aid plans and what the government wants. When the government shows little commitment or participation in some donor-funded development projects that do not match local ideas than the donor reports it as no cooperation or poor capacity. But the government views it as non-implementation of projects that mismatch with our needs and resources.

He also pointed out that even though JICA's evaluation reports were critical of how some ToH Action Plan recommendations were not implemented, the government had resolved to not carry forward with suggested reforms in areas such as small and medium enterprises (SME) development because of some differences between Malaysia and Zambia's socio-economic context. It is unclear the extent to which this approach has been employed by government officials involved in the RETT project. However, if we use the ToH Project Coordinator's logic then in some instances the government's 'uncooperative behaviour' in planning meetings and/or the non-implementation of donor-driven recommendations is an indirect approach to maintaining control over the type of interventions that are introduced into the local development landscape (rather than being a sign that it lacks the strategic capacity to engage in aid negotiations). This approach gives fresh insight into beneficiary partner strategies for negotiating with development cooperation providers and was most likely developed and institutionalized in government systems during Zambia's Structural Adjustment period as a response to the dominance of Northern donors.

It underscores how claims that contemporary TDC partnerships are based on 'equality' and 'respect' cannot erase the legacy of the strict hierarchal relations that were developed during the colonial era and reinforced through the disciplinary measures used to ensure adherence to policy conditions during the 1980s and 1990s. The approach that some local partners employed of relegating their understanding of

country ownership to securing what they want instead of exercising leadership over project planning and implementation, appears to be another institutionalized response to power inequalities with donor and with bureaucratic structures within Zambia as a beneficiary country. These findings indicate that the diverse actors involved in TDC Zambia continue to, as Maldonado-Torres (2007) would put it, “breathing coloniality” in their relations. However, they also indicate that the institutions from beneficiary countries are not passive, but rather have diverse strategies for engaging in development cooperation even though official documents do not clearly articulate these strategies. It also points to how arguments that automatically assume the beneficiary is in a position of weakness relative to its development cooperation providers, fail to reflect the reality of how power relations in TDC are not only determined by material wealth or possession of development knowledge, but also by the practices of institutions involved in its implementation. This further underscores the importance of studying the practices of the institutions involved in trilateral development cooperation and their impact on external spaces.

Conclusion

The discourse promoting TDC in policy spaces and development texts is framing the partnership process as one that supports equality and country ownership. This chapter has challenged these claims and has shown that the historical context of agency is important for understanding how a beneficiary country negotiates and leverages the space available to claim ownership and exercise leadership of TDC. It has demonstrated how global policy trends and external actors have influenced Zambia’s participation in TDC, but are underpinned by ideas from the modernisation and dependency school of thought. TDC is encouraging the Zambian government to replicate East Asian policy experiences in the same manner Western theories on modernisation have always encouraged Zambia to mimic the development experiences of other countries. However, the notion that the country can only realise its desired vision of industrial modernity if it breaks its intellectual/economic

dependence on foreign countries and becomes self-reliant, which is rooted in dependency theory, is still prevalent amongst Zambian political and intellectual elites. Consequently, in spite of postcolonial arguments on the problematic nature of the knower-learner framework in international development, the Zambian government has embraced TDC projects that encourage it to reproduce the development trajectory of other countries and it even emphasises that it wants to 'learn' from these countries. However, its long-term goal in participating in TDC is to build local capacity in specialised areas (such as renewable energy technologies) and reduce its dependence on external assistance to support the functioning of public institutions and the industrial sector.

Globalization has made it nearly impossible for a competitive economy to avoid the use of foreign expertise in its development process. However, economic sovereignty has remained an important part of the Zambian imaginary of development due to its history of colonial domination and later donor domination during the Structural Adjustment era. The research findings indicate that the structure of TDC does grant beneficiary countries greater policy space and ownership of development when compared to other modalities, but it cannot completely dismantle the deep-rooted unequal power relations embedded in international development cooperation. For this reason, some beneficiary partners do not believe that space to take leadership of the design, implementation and evaluation of TDC is available to them or a priority, and hence they relegate their understanding of exercising 'ownership' to securing their desired outcomes from a project (that is, skills, technologies or infrastructure). Nevertheless, trilateral partnerships are complex and should not only be viewed through the traditional lens of arguments that assume donor-beneficiary relations are strictly hierarchal or exploitative, instead it should be recognised that the beneficiary country does assert its authority in silent and unexpected ways. Zambian stakeholders are more active and committed to seeing the successful implementation of a TDC project that is demand-driven (such as the ToH project) when compared to that proposed by a development cooperation provider, which is viewed as an external intervention infringing on their control of the local development landscape (for example, the RETT project). As a consequence, some of the actions that development

cooperation providers label as ‘passive participation’, ‘uncooperative behaviour’ or ‘non-implementation of recommendations’ in evaluation reports, are in fact part of a silent strategy deployed by Zambian stakeholders to challenge the uneven power relations created in partnerships through the development cooperation provider having more material wealth and political influence. Beneficiaries also assert their power over the local development landscape by only supporting the implementation of externally-generated TDC proposals that align with what they consider to be the top development priorities (e.g. rural electrification) and the solutions to address these problems (e.g. solar energy technologies).

The next chapter draws on these arguments to illustrate the diverse ways in which the beneficiary partner manages the diverse political and commercial interests that underlie TDC and have an impact on country ownership. It also explores how private sector involvement in TDC further complicates the complex interplay between stakeholder self-interests and the beneficiary country’s ability to exercise ownership of and obtain sustainable outcomes from TDC initiatives. This is followed by a discussion in Chapter Six that challenges ongoing assumptions that TDC contributes to sustainability and self-reliance, seeing as institutional memory on investment promotion built up from the ToH project has been lost and there is a risk that knowledge concerning renewable energies gained from the RETT project may also disappear.

Power and Politics in TDC

This chapter examines the extent to which the politics of partnership supports or undermines beneficiary country ownership of TDC. The use of an institutional ethnographic approach enabled the research to uncover the multiple layers of power and politics driving the institutions/countries involved in Triangle of Hope (ToH) project and the China-Zambia renewable energy technology transfer (RETT) project, and their subsequent impact on the beneficiary country's ability to exercise ownership. These layers of power and corresponding interests can be divided into three domains – the global, national, and institutional. The *institutional* scale comprises the bureaucratic, academic and private sector organisations that are involved in the day-to-day implementation of project activities. Most mid-level technocrats and development practitioners from these institutions tend to concentrate on the technical aspects of TDC, that is, accomplishing the overall project objectives. It is for this reason, as discussed in Chapter Four, informants such as the solar energy centre of excellence Project Manager and his team expressed that they did not care about any issues related to RETT project beyond the construction of the solar energy laboratory. However, in spite of their desire to focus on only the technical aspects of TDC, the implementation of the ToH and RETT projects are affected by the domestic and international political concerns of partner countries. At the *national* scale, this is because senior policymakers and politicians involved in the negotiation and design of TDC projects tend to make decisions aimed at tackling national development priorities. In some cases, decision-making is also influenced by domestic political concerns, especially those aimed at sustaining their political viability, or opportunities to obtain personal economic benefits. At the *global* scale, policymakers and politicians in the beneficiary country and partner countries also view TDC initiatives through the lens of their national interests (that is, commercial, soft power or security interests). These factors limit the room available for institutional actors to express agency and

select the most suitable interventions to be introduced through TDC. This chapter demonstrates the unexpected ways in which beneficiary partners negotiate these challenges, and their perception that global policy discourses on TDC do not accurately reflect development practice, in order to ensure that they secure the development knowledge and technologies that they desire from these interventions. It also demonstrates that arguments for multi-stakeholder partnerships are not straightforward through a discussion of how private sector involvement in TDC initiatives complicates the complex interplay between stakeholder self-interests and the beneficiary country's ability to exercise ownership.

'Denmark's only interest is China': TDC as a space for rewesternization?

As discussed in Chapter Two, the rapid economic growth experienced by middle-income Southern countries has generated alternative models of industrial modernity for developing countries, and intensified debates about the effectiveness of Western knowledge frameworks in the post-structural adjustment and post-global financial crisis world. China, Brazil and India (as part of the BRICS grouping) have received significant praise for accelerating the dewesternization of knowledge production and for creating a counter-hegemonic challenge to the dominance of Northern institutions in international development, through their establishment of multilateral institutions such as the New Development Bank (Mignolo 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2019). This thesis contends that Zambia's interest in learning about East Asian models of industrial modernity in the ToH and RETT projects makes TDC a space to observe how dewesternization of development thinking is occurring in Zambia. However, TDC is also a space to observe how Northern countries are attempting to manage and influence how development knowledge is disseminated in South-South exchanges. The relevance of these arguments can be seen through an exploration of the opinions key stakeholder in the ToH and RETT projects expressed on the underlying reasons development cooperation providers supported these projects.

Significantly, most informants on the RETT project in Zambia expressed that Denmark's only interest in the project was China. The UNDP Zambia Project Focal Person stated that, "Denmark's role in the RETT project has been limited to providing the project finances [US\$2.6 million] and contributing towards the project design, particularly the expected outcomes. However, its role after this has been minimal. Denmark's only interest in the project was to influence China" (Interview, 7 September 2017). Most informants could not elaborate on what this interest was but their opinions did cast light on the potential reason Denmark re-emerged in the Zambian development landscape with the RETT project in 2014 after its formal retreat in 2011. As discussed in Chapter Four, this retreat occurred in the midst of tensions with a less aid-dependent and assertive Zambian government that told its Northern development cooperation providers that it expected them to respect the principles of non-interference and non-conditionality or to leave. When the question of Denmark's reason for supporting the RETT project was put forward to the Danida Advisor in Beijing, she responded with the following statement:

Denmark decided to support this project in the process of seeking partnerships with new development actors, and triangular cooperation with UNDP was seen as an interesting concept. Denmark has six decades of experience with development cooperation that we wished to convey to new development actors, such as China. Accordingly, the purpose of the Danish support is to promote good development practices for new and growing actors in Africa (in this case in Ghana and Zambia), where China is becoming more committed...Apart from addressing the specific needs related to the transfer of renewable energy technology from China to Ghana and Zambia, the project also attempts to empower Chinese institutions in general in managing social and cultural aspects related to China's transition from being a receiver to becoming a provider of development assistance, and in including the local context when implementing development assistance programmes. The overall aim of the support is thus to develop a more effective South-South cooperation platform. Additionally, the project has strong links to Danida funded activities in China and Africa in the field of renewable energy technology transfer and

climate change. The project is the first of its kind for Denmark, and also for international donors working with China in Africa. It is therefore seen as a pilot case for indirect Danish support to South-South cooperation as current donor countries move from least developed to mid-developed countries, and traditional donors phase-out. This development changes the donor landscape and the aid architecture making models for cooperation between traditional and newer donors, including within South-South cooperation, very important. (Email communication with Ms N, 9 December 2018)

This statement aligns with objectives outlined in RETT project documentation (UNDP 2014; Danida 2014b). This perspective also matches the explanation provided by the UNDP Zambia Project Focal Person who asserted that:

The Danish were interested in helping the Chinese government to learn how to interact with African countries. Chinese culture, way of doing business and expectations are different when they come to African countries, so one focus of the project is to develop Chinese skills to interact with different stakeholders in African countries (Interview, 7 September 2017).

These statements on how Denmark wants to teach China and enhance its capacity to deliver SSC indicate the extent to which trusteeship and the knower-learner frame of thinking are embedded in international development cooperation. Like many other Northern countries, Denmark has moved on from directly delivering development cooperation to the poorest countries, to supporting the development cooperation activities of Southern partners with more context-relevant development knowledge. It views the global development architecture as a space for global diplomacy and TDC as a vehicle through which it can sensitise Southern cooperation providers on its best practice, norms and values. For example, Denmark's 2012 Strategy for Development Cooperation emphasises its 'global responsibility' to ensure that we live a world characterised by peace, security, a human rights-based legal order, economic stability and joint solutions to environmental and health problems (Danida 2012, p.3). It also

states that these objectives and values should not be taken for granted with the emergence of China, India, Brazil, South Korea, South Africa and the Gulf states, who appear to prioritise commercial opportunities in development cooperation, and hence Denmark has to forge partnerships with these actors and argue more persuasively for its values (Danida 2012, p.7). This would indicate that Denmark intends to use trilateral partnerships to convince these Southern cooperation providers and beneficiary countries that Western political, economic and epistemic values and practices are the best frameworks to operate within.

Denmark's intentions in the RETT project maybe to impart Western traditions and regulatory standards to China, but China has also recognised the benefits of learning from or at least appearing to learn from Northern countries. As Zhang (2017) points out, participating in TDC enables China to improve the quality of its technical cooperation, re-brand itself as a responsible global development actor and counter Northern discourses on the Chinese 'threat' and 'new imperialism'. TDC initiatives such as the RETT project also enable China to build its allies across the North-South divide who can support its position in debates on its complex internal affairs and global strategy. This is especially important in light of ongoing concerns from the United States government that China is using its development cooperation, more broadly, to develop a new world order built on its own image. In many ways, China is replicating lessons from the historical trajectory of Northern countries, especially how the operations of empire enabled colonial powers to embed the notion that their knowledge frameworks and practices are superior and, therefore, colonised peoples should mimic them in order to attain modernity. This has enabled former colonial powers to influence knowledge production, policymaking and 'the contents of the conversation' in post-colonial times. As Edward Said points out, nations are themselves narrations and the power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is crucial in the construction of a great empire and its ability to retain power (Said 1993, p.xiii). This is where TDC emerges as a space from which to observe the counter processes of dewesternization and rewesternization. On the one hand, TDC enables China to disseminate its development model, signal that it is not a rogue predator, to build allies, and to block narratives that would hinder its global

strategy to become a superpower. On the other hand, Denmark is able to use TDC to promote its (Western) values and uphold its status as ‘a small country with a big voice’ in global governance structures. Its 2012 Strategy supports this argument by emphasising that Denmark will have to bring all its “strengths and competencies into play in our cooperation with developing countries in order to ensure that we remain a relevant and sought after partner, in light of the fact that developing countries are creating new alliances, which are similar to and even excluding traditional donors” (Danida 2012, p.7).

It was surprising to find that key stakeholders in the ToH and RETT projects also put forward this notion of Northern countries engaging directly with SSC partnerships in order to maintain their relevance in global governance structures as the underlying reasons driving trilateral development cooperation:

Western countries are trying to remain relevant by engaging in trilateral partnerships. People need to accept that China is now a superpower. China has avoided participating in trilateral projects with the North. As much as Western countries may have their own interests (whether its economic or political interests) for trying to maintain a trilateral partnership with China they also have to realise that for China to now agree now it must also have its own interests. That is what we also need here. (Interview with the UNDP Zambia Project Focal Person, 7 September 2017)

Japan did not get much from this project. We see the project as a failure because outcomes were not maintained. Even for us to state that the project was satisfactory in the ex-post evaluation report was a matter of us being diplomatic. But if I had to say one reason that made Japan get involved in the project, it was image building. To be able to say ‘we are also there in Zambia or Africa working’. (Interview with JICA Programme Officer, 5 February 2018)

I would describe Japanese ODA as aid that you do not see. Chinese aid is more visible with all their infrastructure projects and even Western aid is seen.

However, Japanese aid is quiet in the background. They do not really provide much funding for aid projects. That is why they use selected projects such as the Triangle of Hope to maintain their relationship with countries like Zambia. (Interview with ToH Project Coordinator, 17 January 2018)

However, one point that stood out from these statements was the role that the Sino-Japanese rivalry plays in Japan's development cooperation activities in Africa. The JICA Programme Officer alluded to this rivalry while explaining Japan's process for appraising beneficiary requests for technical cooperation. He stated that, "The approval process for JICA support takes long, we are not like the Chinese who do things anyhow. JICA experts came to Zambia on about 3 to 4 missions to survey the need for the ToH project and its viability" (Interview, 5 February 2018). This framing is significant given that China has eclipsed Japan to become Africa's leading Asian development cooperation provider over the last decade. Japan's official narrative on its relationship with Africa has sought to distinguish itself from other development cooperation providers by emphasizing its history as an all-weather friend. For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website states that:

When the Cold War ended, developed countries' interest in providing aid to Africa began to wane. Under such circumstances, it was Japan that argued for the importance of Africa, and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) was the proof of Japan taking action. Nowadays, there are various fora through which many countries engage themselves with Africa, but TICAD launched by Japan was the forerunner of such fora for African development (MOFA 2016).

Burghart's (2017, p.411) review of Japanese development cooperation literature finds that it tends to emphasise its role as a global leader in various fields, which positions it in a hierarchal relationship with its beneficiary countries. However, as Abdenur and

Da Fonseca (2013, p.1486) point out, JICA has specifically adopted the discourse of ‘co-creation’ in its policy literatures to create the perception that it supports horizontal and mutual learning, and to distance itself from debates on the paternalism in North-South partnerships. This research finds that Japan also frames some of its past bilateral cooperation as TDC in order to strengthen its reputation as the leading facilitator of TDC from the global North. JICA publications such as Kato (2012) and Hosono (2013) present the ToH project as trilateral cooperation. However, as discussed in Chapter Three, most informants refused to describe the ToH project as a TDC initiative, describing it instead as a bilateral technical cooperation project between Japan and Zambia, but in which Malaysian technical experts were contracted to help plan and implement the knowledge transfer process. The JICA Programme Officer also confirmed it was a bilateral cooperation project. The OECD has identified four ways in which TDC is established: a Northern cooperation provider offers its support to a South-South exchange; a Southern cooperation provider joins a North-South bilateral project; bilateral cooperation between a Northern and Southern cooperation provider is used as a basis to develop a new project in another Southern country; or a Northern cooperation provider, Southern cooperation provider and the beneficiary partner jointly develop a TDC project (OECD 2013, p.15). Therefore, the ToH project can be defined as a TDC project, even though it was officially negotiated and implemented on a bilateral basis. However, the contradiction between the reality of development practice and how Japan frames its partnerships in its texts and policy spaces provides another example of how nations form and control narratives in order to magnify or preserve their power.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Japan’s soft power ambitions also include using TDC to position East Asian economic development models as developing countries preferred alternatives to the Washington Consensus model. Despite the presence of a Sino-Japanese rivalry, China’s development cooperation is modelled on the Japanese approach and is also attempting to promote the ‘easternization’ of development thinking. However, Japan’s actions underscore that geographical imaginations of the global North are more complex than assumed and that the global North is not a united force in the efforts to counter the dewesternization of the development thinking that

the emerging powers have accelerated. Nevertheless, Japan's attempt to maintain some control of how East Asian models are disseminated in the global South by positioning itself as the leading facilitator of TDC also mirrors the actions of other Northern countries.

Overall, the above findings support McEwan and Mawdsley (2012) and Abdenur and Da Fonseca's (2013) arguments that Northern countries interest in facilitating SSC through trilateral development cooperation are part of the wider power struggle over economic, political and security spaces. However, despite this evidence, most key stakeholders in the ToH and RETT projects stressed that they did not care about the geopolitics underlying each intervention and that they were only interested in the technical aspects of TDC at the institutional scale. For example, the UNDP China RETT Programme Manager emphasised:

I don't know what you found in the other trilateral projects that you have been researching but you could argue why is Denmark financing this project? Why do they care? Zambia is not a priority country for Denmark anymore, although Ghana and China are priorities. To me, it has to do with their difficulty in getting access to the Chinese government and these types of projects create access through, for example, the steering committee meetings. This is a project that does a lot of good and really builds South-South capacity, but it also opens up opportunities for them to sit with government representatives from the highest levels. From these meetings, they develop various knowledge products and activities which allow them to interact with each other and/or access information. So maybe this is the context the Danish were looking at in order to get around the difficulty of getting access to the Chinese government. However, my task is as the Programme Manager for the RETT projects in Zambia and Ghana is to make sure that things get done. These projects are measured based on their outputs, outcomes and the impact. This project really has nothing to do with the relationship building between the donor and China. It is focussing on developing global technology transfer under the SSC framework and that is what we are measured on. Have we been able to deliver

this project and get the outcomes that we set out to achieve when we agreed to implement this project on behalf of Denmark? We are never measured on Denmark's ability to get access to the Chinese government. I do think that is an interesting perspective on the trilateral modality. And by all means, if that is what they want from this project, then that is great. However, that is not something that we talk about or think is relevant for the project. (Interview, 7 September 2018)

This demonstrates that many development practitioners are committed to ensuring that development interventions are efficiently delivered to beneficiary partners even though senior policymakers and politicians having underlying motives for development cooperation at the national or global scale. However, his emphasis on the technical aspects of the project also supports David Mosse's (2011, p.53) argument that development practitioners tend to view any questions related to the wider context of their work or notions of self-interest in development interventions as undermining their professionalism. Mosse (2011, p.55) also points out, that development practitioners tend to lead researchers away from narratives that draw attention to the informal processes that underlie official actions and have the potential to disrupt the professional networks built around the shared representation of specific interventions and towards narratives of success that promote ideas and practices that can be replicated in other contexts. In the case of the TDC, this narrative tends to be that it assists beneficiary countries to achieve priorities in their national development plans and builds the project management capacity of Southern cooperation providers. However, the findings of this study have disrupted that narrative and shown that development cooperation providers have diverse interests underlying their engagement in TDC. The next section will proceed to examine how Zambian stakeholders negotiate the geopolitics of TDC.

Beneficiary agency and the geopolitics of TDC

The absence of beneficiary country perspectives in ongoing debates on the changing geographies of power and development undermines their agency and contributes to their ‘subalternity’ or marginalisation to a lower rank within international development (Sharp 2013). This underscores the importance of listening to the subaltern’s voice and acknowledging that they employ diverse strategies to contest and negotiate the power that enables dominant countries to influence their local development landscape. Chapter Four demonstrated that the country’s history of colonial domination and donor domination during the Structural Adjustment era has increased the importance of economic sovereignty and non-conditionality in policy elite’s visions on country ownership in Zambia. It also highlighted that the government has in recent years chosen to strengthen its economic relations with ‘non-interfering’ Southern partners in order to counter the power that Northern countries have had to influence national policymaking. Zambian technocrats in both the ToH and RETT projects also adopted a number of strategic actions to manage the geopolitics of TDC and specifically the risks to diplomatic relations with China.

According to the ToH Project Coordinator, one strategic response occurred during preparations for a series of foreign investment promotion missions, at which it was noted that Japan pushed for Taiwan to be included on the list of Asian countries that would be targeted. However, he emphasised that the Zambian government rejected this suggestion because “we were interested in maintaining our diplomatic relationship with China and didn’t want to upset them” (Interview with ToH Project Coordinator, 17 January 2018). Archival analysis sheds light on how the China-Zambia diplomatic relationship was strained at the time due to Michael Sata’s populist campaign for the 2006 Presidential elections, which incorporated an anti-Chinese investment and immigration discourse following fatalities at Chinese-owned businesses. Sata also upset the Chinese government by establishing links with Taiwanese businesses and politicians and promising to recognise Taiwan as a sovereign state if he won the

elections.³¹ This was during a period when the Levy Mwanawasa-led administration and private sector actors were actively seeking investments and development cooperation from China. Consequently, senior government officials had to repeatedly express their support for the ‘One China Policy’ in order to appease the Chinese government, which had begun to threaten an end to its diplomatic relations with Zambia.³²

Michael Sata’s position gradually shifted to being pro-Beijing after he ascended to the presidency in 2011 and he even went on record to state that his new strategy would be to use partnerships with the Chinese government to develop the country (Lusaka Times 2011b). China also committed itself to strengthening its relationship with Zambia, and, over the course of the last decade, became one of the country’s most important bilateral partners. Even though Michael Sata’s actions were initially aimed at altering the practices of Chinese business entities and winning over the electorate, Sautman (2015) argues that Sata’s strategic use of a racializing rhetoric is an important example of how African actors are also influencing the actions of the Chinese state based on the knowledge that China needs Africa’s resources, commercial markets and political alliances. This underscores the importance of mutuality within international relations. China’s power and authority as one of the most significant providers of SSC is not solely a result of its material wealth or its ownership of valuable development knowledge or technologies, it is also dependent on African countries actually seeking its development cooperation. Unfortunately, a negative consequence of Sata’s racializing rhetoric is that public opinion and Zambian news media coverage of Chinese economic and development cooperation activities have remained negative and continued to characterise ‘the Chinese’ as untrustworthy and predatory.

³¹ For more see Chellah, G. and Malupenga, A. (2006) ‘Taiwanese, Sata Meet in Lilongwe’, *The Post*; Mupuchi, S. (2006a) ‘Zambia Doesn’t Owe China Anything- Sata’, *The Post*; The Post (2007) ‘Sata visits Taiwan’, *The Post*; Times of Zambia (2007) ‘State Monitors Sata’s Anti-China Campaign’, *Times of Zambia*.

³² Former president Kenneth Kaunda was sent to Beijing to formerly apologise and repair diplomatic relations with China. See the Times of Zambia (2006d) ‘China threatens to cut ties’, *Times of Zambia*; Times of Zambia (2006c) ‘Levy Apologises to China Over Sata’s Remarks’, *Times of Zambia*; Sunday Times of Zambia (2007) ‘China valid partner- Kaunda.’

This brings us to the second example of how technocrats managed risks to the country's relations with China in the RETT project. One of this study's main research questions is aimed at understanding the nature of partnerships in TDC and key stakeholder interviews included questions on the partnership process (see Appendix for template). Given the wider context of the China-Zambia relationship discussed above, I anticipated that there was a possibility that some Zambian informants would express an anti-Chinese sentiment. Surprisingly, most informants became guarded but insisted that they had a great working relationship with their Chinese partners in the RETT project when asked about their interactions.

From what I hear the Chinese treasure trust so much. Therefore, I think it just takes patience and some understanding that we are from different cultures to make such partnerships work. It is important for us to make an effort to learn Chinese because they have gone out of their way to learn a little English. Last year we had thought of enrolling for Chinese lessons at the Confucius centre at UNZA but the schedule has just been too tight. But I think as Africans we also need to learn a little bit about their language and culture. (Interview RETT Project Manager, 22 September 2017)

The language difference was the main barrier. We are not able to speak Chinese so we had to rely on interpreters when discussing with our Chinese colleagues. Otherwise, the people in China were generally more welcoming and accommodating than other countries where we have travelled too. (Interview with members of solar energy centre excellence PMU, 25 September 2017)

The UNDP Zambia Project Focal Person also suggested that the project had helped to foster understanding and break negative stereotypes of Chinese people (Interview, 7 September 2017). Subsequently, these statements could be taken as an indication that the RETT project's goal of increasing understanding between Chinese institutions and Zambian stakeholders was accomplished. However, these statements also support

studies that have argued that anti-Chinese sentiment in Africa is a lot more complex than it is usually presented in the news media (e.g. Hess and Aidoo 2015; Sautman and Hairong 2016). As Breslin (2013) points out, the Chinese presence in Africa countries can be disaggregated into large-scale private investors, small to medium-scale entrepreneurs, state-owned enterprises, and diplomatic/development cooperation officials, with each group having different interests and relations with local people. The majority of anti-Chinese sentiments in Zambia are directed towards large to medium-scale entrepreneurs due to past scandals in the mining sectors, fears that local producers will be pushed out of the market, and rumours over corrupt practices in the purchase of land and bidding for road contracts from the government. However, the RETT project is being managed at the state-to-state level at which relations have generally been cordial since the construction of the TAZARA railway in the 1970s. Hence, it was reasonable for Zambian stakeholders in the RETT project who are mostly technocrats and academics from public institutions to express positive views of their Chinese partners. Given the wider context surrounding the controversy about China-Zambia relations, it was also pertinent for them to protect future flows of development cooperation by being careful about how they presented their relationship to external parties such as journalists or researchers. This would also explain the suspicions and challenges I encountered in securing key stakeholder interviews on the ToH and RETT projects (see Chapter Three), and the reasons potential research informants may have felt that this study had implications for their own national security.

It is important to highlight these strategic responses since African agency is often only attributed to acts of resistance, such as the previous chapter's examples of how stakeholders in the ToH and RETT projects resisted pressure from its partners to implement recommendations that it did not agree with, when they do express agency in different ways. However, Zambian stakeholders are not passively observing geopolitical concerns in TDC but have diverse, if not occasionally silent, strategies to manage these partnerships. It is clear that they are self-censoring statements on China-Zambia relations in order to control the public discourse on China and ensure that they continue to access the economic benefits of this relationship.

Comparing South-South and North-South partnerships

In the course of discussions concerning the China-Zambia-Denmark partnership, it became clear that Denmark's minimal role in the implementation of the RETT project created more room for Zambian stakeholders to exercise ownership and leadership of project activities. However, key stakeholders from the RETT and ToH projects also confirmed findings from past studies that suggest beneficiary partners view South-South relations as easier than North-South relations:

SSC is helpful. Partnerships between countries with similar background or circumstances are much more meaningful and easier. China is still considered a developing country. It is easier to interact with the Chinese than with counterparts from developed countries like the United States or the UK. Relationships are more respectful and mutually beneficial. (Interview with UNDP Zambia Project Focal Person, 7 September 2017)

Malaysia's development experience was a good model for Zambia to learn from them more generally because it still faces some of the challenges found in developing countries like ours. So it is easier to learn from them than it is with partners from Western countries who have less ability to understand the challenges found here. Have you been to Malaysia? They have made lots of progress especially in areas such as education. My son is actually studying architecture at a university in Malaysia. (Interview with ToH Project Coordinator, 17 January 2018)

In spite of the fact that most stakeholders were diplomatic when addressing questions of their partnership with China, the RETT Project Manager also conceded it was easier to negotiate with Chinese partners in trilateral modality rather than in a bilateral partnership since the funding came from a third source [Denmark] and to some extent this placed China and Zambia at the same level in the project (Interview, 22 September 2017). Other research informants such as Mr C (RETT solar energy centre of excellence PMU) and Mr I (ToH Health taskforce member) did not agree with such viewpoints but felt, based on their experience working on multiple development

projects, that partnerships with Western donors such as Sweden were no different from South-South partnerships. Moreover, the RETT Project Manager asserted that the main lesson he learnt from managing a TDC partnership with China was not to be passive. This mirrors comments made by the solar energy centre of excellence Project Manager when relaying how he resisted pressure from Poly Solar Technologies Beijing Ltd to market its solar energy equipment across the country as part of their memoranda of understanding (MoU). He emphasised the importance of “knowing what you want and being assertive when dealing with Chinese partners” (Interview with, 30 January 2018).

These differing perceptions of partnerships underscore the complexity of power relations in TDC. However, Mr K who is a senior civil servant at the Ministry of Finance also emphasised the limits to which a beneficiary country can express its agency when negotiating with development partners:

Our ability to strategically leverage our position in South-South or trilateral cooperation is affected by the fact that development projects are always influenced by the donor. It is easier to ensure win-win outcomes with Southern partners. Northern donors tend to emphasise too much on political conditionalities like good governance or economic conditionalities like private sector development and debt sustainability (will not lend if debt exceeds 40% of GDP). But none of these issues matters when it comes to our relations with Southern countries like China. We just ask them for whatever we want such as roads, when we need it, and we know that they will assist us. With the North, there will never be equality between us as long as they are more financially wealthy than us African countries. But at the end of the day whether you want to call these other countries our cooperating partners or donors, and we are the recipient or beneficiary, or whatever words you use to sugar-coat it, the aid relationship is always affected by the issue of comparative advantage. The North introduced the Paris Declaration and the Busan Partnership Agreement to improve the effectiveness of aid but most countries have continued with business as usual and have not implemented the changes that were agreed. For

example, most Northern donors refuse to channel project finances or handle procurement through local systems...So you see our ability to secure ownership of development projects is affected by the fact that donors tend to be inclined to self-interest, especially commercial interests. (Interview with ToH Banking and Finance taskforce member, 28 February 2018)

Mr K's statement is a resounding judgement on how the rhetoric of 'equality' and 'country ownership' in policy spaces and development texts, does not reflect the reality of what occurs in development practice. His views on the differences between the reform of development language (for example, the use of the term 'beneficiary' as opposed to 'recipient') and the reality of what occurs in development practice, is a primary example of how the participants in the TDC projects contested the real and imagined spaces in international development. It underscores how efforts to reform the language used to describe development partnerships, as part of the aid effectiveness agenda, has not restructured power relations in development practice. This is an issue that also requires further reflection in postcolonial scholarship in order to ensure that the critique of development texts, discourse and the changing geographies of power, adequately captures the priorities and perspective of the 'subaltern' countries.

Private sector development and the limits to inclusive ownership

Mr K's description of private sector development as an economic conditionality imposed by Northern donors draws specific attention to how the material wealth held by development cooperation providers sustains power imbalances and enables them to influence the development process of the beneficiary country, in spite of the rhetoric of 'country ownership' circulating within policy spaces. His assertion that development cooperation providers tend to be inclined to using development projects to secure self-interests aligns with views expressed by most of this study's informants

on the RETT and ToH projects, who believed that commercial opportunities were the main underlying factors driving Chinese and Malaysian partner's interest in each project:

I think the Chinese interest in this project was to create a market in Zambia to offload surplus technologies from their renewable energy industry. There is a lot of attention to African countries right now, so you see this project allowed them to introduce their products here easily without them spending a lot of money since the funding came from Denmark. We could clearly see that was their objective. Nobody is coming here for charity. This is fine as long as we can also take care of our interests. (Interview with solar energy centre of excellence Project Manager, 30 January 2018)

However, the UNDP Zambia Project Focal Person emphasised that the overall aim of the RETT project management team was to create a platform for mutual benefits from which Chinese and Zambian engineers and entrepreneurs can develop renewable energy technologies and engage in exchanges (Interview, 7 September 2017). The Triangle of Hope project had similar objectives and outcomes, such as the signing of MoUs for joint ventures and business contracts. Nevertheless, what is most significant in the solar energy centre of excellence Project Manager's statement is the recognition that self-interest is a normal part of international relations and they were not passively observing these actions. The ToH Project Coordinator expressed a similar opinion when discussing how Malaysian businesses secured investment opportunities in Zambia and he emphasised that "each country knows what it wants in such partnerships" (Interview, 17 January 2018).

As discussed in Chapter Two, economic cooperation is an integral part of SSC and, as a result, development cooperation activities that result in opportunities for investment, trade and market access is considered a part of mutually beneficial relations among developing countries. Therefore, the commercial opportunities Malaysian and Chinese private sector business companies were able to benefit from in the ToH and RETT

projects are a normal part of South-South relations. This approach to development cooperation initially attracted criticism from Northern cooperation providers for going beyond their definition of official development assistance. However, Mawdsley (2018) points out that, Northern development cooperation underwent an ideational shift in focus from poverty reduction to promoting private sector-led economic growth after the 2008-9 global financial crisis, and most countries are now explicitly blending development finances with their trade and investment agendas. For example, the Danish government's initial appraisal of the RETT project emphasised the importance of ensuring that the project provides a platform for promoting Danish renewable energy technologies and expertise, and that the China-Zambia exchange should not contribute to a situation where Danish companies lose market shares in Zambia (Danida 2014a).

Mawdsley (2018, p.182) also argues that by adopting this approach and the discursive practices of SSC, Northern countries have moved past having only tutelary ambitions to embracing some of its elements. The 2018 State of the Union address by the European Commission President, which evokes 'the imaginary of similarities' in order to emphasize that the future of Europe's relations with Africa should be trade, investments and capacity building, is a primary example of how this 'Southernisation' of international development cooperation has transformed discursive practices:

To speak of the future, one must speak of Africa – Europe's twin continent... We need to invest more in our relationship with the nations of this great and noble continent. And we have to stop seeing this relationship through the sole prism of development aid. Such an approach is beyond inadequate, humiliatingly so. Africa does not need charity, it needs true and fair partnerships. And Europe needs this partnership just as much (Juncker 2018).

Juncker's statement on Europe's dependence on Africa further supports the argument that mutuality is an undisputable part of international relations and that the position of African countries in the changing geographies of power has clearly been strengthened by the rise of the Southern cooperation providers. However, TDC is only pushing

beneficiary countries such as Zambia further along the neoliberal trajectory of private sector growth, which it was compelled to follow through donor conditionalities, and which Northern-led policy forums on TDC are consistently claiming can help generate innovative development solutions and enhance sustainable development (see GPEDC 2016; OECD 2017; UN 2019). For example, one of Japan's main reasons for supporting the ToH project was to play a role, alongside other Northern cooperation providers, in assisting Zambia to improve its investment climate as part of the private sector development (PSD) reform process that was initiated in 2004 (Shimoda 2012, p.132). In addition, one of the RETT project's main objectives was to reform Zambia's institutional and regulatory frameworks in order to create an environment where the private sector can take over the government's responsibility for producing and distributing electricity.³³

It is important to note that the ToH and RETT projects were not based on the Washington Consensus model, which favours full deregulation and a reduced role of the state. Rather, both projects promoted East Asian models of economic development which support limited deregulation to create a conducive environment for private sector economic growth while upholding government ownership of development. This is the development model the Zambian government has committed to in its *Seventh National Development Plan 2017-21*, where it states it intends to reposition itself as a developmental state based on lessons from countries such as South Korea (MNDP 2017, p.34). This indicates that policy elites in Zambia have reverted to the post-independence approach of development planning which involved the adoption of elements from both Northern and Southern development models, in order to achieve their desired vision of industrial modernity. However, increased private sector involvement in development can complicate country ownership. On the one hand, increased private sector involvement can help to mitigate some of the challenges

³³ As part of the PSD agenda, a significant amount of the development cooperation that Zambia has received in recent years has been directed to the construction of transport and energy sector infrastructure, the adoption of low carbon use technologies and other measures to address climate change adaptation. All the projects listed on the Ministry of National Development Planning's website, which includes the RETT project, fall under these themes. MNDP (2019) 'Projects', accessed 16 September 2019, <http://www.mndp.gov.zm/>

associated with the state having monopoly power over economic activity, such as limited service provision. However, it can also create opportunities for the state to magnify its power. As Power and Kirshner (2018, p.504) point out, this is because access to electricity extends ‘progress’ to rural households by broadening the range of appliances that can be utilised and the economic opportunities that people can engage in, which creates the perception that the state is bringing modernity to its citizenry. Accordingly, the RETT project’s goal of creating a conducive environment for private sector participation in the expansion of electricity infrastructures in Zambia benefits the government by enabling it to both close the energy gap between the rural and urban areas and consolidate its legitimacy and domestic power.

The state has the authority to act on behalf of the general citizenry in all activities; therefore, government ownership and leadership of development interventions is not necessarily a problem as long as it secures the best interests of the people. However, rural electrification also empowers the private sector and expands the neoliberal agenda of bringing more people into the energy market. Private-sector ownership of development can be problematic since it does not have a public mandate nor the obligation to ensure that interventions align with local priorities and results in sustainable development outcomes. Research has shown the private sector is less likely to engage in participatory planning or consider community needs when introducing a project. For example, McEwan’s (2017) study of South Africa’s renewable energy transitions finds that private sector actors tend to cluster energy projects in high-density areas where resources are available and profits can be maximised. Similarly, the state’s delegation to the private sector over the expansion of electricity infrastructures in rural Zambia has the potential to lead to ‘islands’ of progress and to create tensions in rural communities. In addition, various studies have found that private sector energy companies rarely engage in community awareness initiatives to ensure that potential users understand and support the introduction of new technologies or infrastructure (e.g. McEwan 2017).

In the case, of the RETT project, institutional actors involved in the design of the project plan focussed on how they could ensure that there is a sustainable source of

energy production in rural areas, but not how the introduction of the small hydropower plant at Chipota Falls would affect the everyday life of people in its vicinity. As the RETT Project Manager noted, it was more of an afterthought that came up during project implementation with a group of social scientists from the Rural Electrification Authority (REA) handling community liaison activities (Interview, 22 September 2017). REA helped the project by sensitizing the local community on the entrance of the contractor in the community, labour issues related to how not everyone would be employed, to where the transmission line will pass, the need to add electric wiring to their housing units and the productive uses of electricity. However, the likelihood of a purely private sector-led hydropower project adopting this approach to community engagement is low.

These challenges will only be further complicated by the fact that TDC initiatives such as the RETT project promote the involvement of both domestic and international private sector energy companies in Zambia's energy market. As seen in the statement below, the politics of energy access is complex and can affect country ownership of development interventions, such as the RETT project:

We have made a lot of attempts to promote biofuels development in Zambia but there are a lot of counter forces working against us, including in this UNDP-China-Zambia renewable energy technology transfer project you are researching. What happened at the beginning of this project is that the government advertised a tender for the production of ethanol as part of the project. My company put in a bid and won but after 7 months, we heard nothing from the ministry. After some time they told us that the project focus had changed and biofuels were no longer one of the renewable energies being promoted. I approached the Minister of Energy at a workshop to find out what really happened and he said "You know how these things are, some other things came up". That is when I knew there was more to the story and decided to follow up on the issue with UNDP. Some consultants from UNDP China that were here as part of the project told me that the tender had been cancelled because they felt that there was no Zambian company component enough to

do the work. I threatened to sue them so that they could prove their claims in court that my company was not competent enough to do the work. That is when they backed off and gave me 50% of what I would have received for the contract. I later found out that the whole problem was caused by different interests being at play. Some local politicians had wanted energy companies that they were aligned with to win the contracts [in the RETT project]. However, these companies were late in submitting their bids and the procurement officer's in charge of the tender did not want to be accused of engaging in corrupt practices so they rejected their bids. Then instead of proceeding with the project, the ministry decided to cancel our contract. UNDP China also had its own interest in influencing which renewable energies were to be promoted as part of the project. It seems the Chinese wanted to get the tenders for solar energy technologies. (Interview with Mr F, Renewable energy Specialist, 18 January 2018)

This statement demonstrates that diverging stakeholder interests complicate arguments for multi-stakeholder TDC partnerships. The selection of the most appropriate intervention to tackle the energy gap in the RETT project was negatively affected by senior policymakers and politicians involved in its negotiation and design, whose decision-making is alleged by Mr F, to have been based on opportunities for personal enrichment. The commercial interests of the development cooperation provider are also considered to have been an influential factor in the final selection of renewable energy solutions for the RETT project. This demonstrates that the introduction of a TDC intervention is not based solely on its suitability to the local context. It also supports this thesis's overall argument that TDC is not only a modality aimed at supporting capacity development and technology transfer in the beneficiary country, but is also about strategic partnerships that can help secure national interests. Nevertheless, a key take away from the controversial ProSavana project in Mozambique is that even though policymakers and development cooperation providers may consider private sector involvement important for socio-economic

progress, civil society and local communities have different views on what constitutes progress or improved well-being (Chichava *et al.* 2013; Shankland and Goncalves 2016). It is, therefore, important to reflect on the political economies of development cooperation and the validity of policy discourses that suggest private sector involvement in TDC can enhance inclusive national ownership of interventions and sustainable development.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that politics is at the heart of TDC even though policy spaces tend to downplay the geopolitical and geoeconomic ambitions underlying technical cooperation. It has shown that country ownership and the effectiveness of TDC initiatives are highly influenced by domestic and international political concerns of the development cooperation provider and beneficiary country. Global image building and expanding soft power influence are the primary drivers for development cooperation providers such as Japan, Malaysia, Denmark and China to engage in TDC projects in Zambia. China's rise as an economic and political superpower particularly stood out in both the ToH and RETT projects and reflects the logics and dynamics of TDC. Northern countries such as Denmark are attempting to use TDC to sensitise Southern cooperation providers such as China to deliver their development programmes within the Western political, economic, legal and epistemic frameworks. It can be argued that these actions reflect Northern cooperation provider's efforts to manage the dewesternization of development thinking that emerging powers such as China have accelerated in the global South. Denmark is also supporting South-South/trilateral development cooperation in order to maintain its relevance and influence in the global development architecture and to access the many benefits that are associated with being a donor country. Japan shares this motive. However, it is also using TDC to promote its model of industrial modernity and to compete with China for leadership in facilitating the transfer of policy experiences from East Asia to African countries. However, China is primarily using TDC to improve its image

and to counter narratives about its ‘predatory’ development cooperation and global strategy.

Africa’s role as a strategically important development partner is rising in the midst of this global power struggle over economic spaces, political spaces and the sources of knowledge production. However, there is a risk that African beneficiary partners will have difficulty in strategically leveraging their negotiating positions in future TDC initiatives if Denmark and other Northern cooperation providers are successful in their efforts to socialise China into adopting their best practice. Nevertheless, this chapter has shown that the agency of the subaltern in geopolitical spaces is not only demonstrated through resistance. The Zambian government has used strategies such as upholding its recognition of the ‘One China’ policy and even co-signing China’s strategy of controlling narratives on its development cooperation in order to sustain the easy flow of economic benefits from this relationship. Significantly, Zambia’s ability to strategically strengthen its bargaining power in TDC is negatively affected by internal politics and diverging interests. The next chapter will build on this argument by examining how the changes in the domestic political terrain and bureaucracies have affected development planning, institutional memory, and the sustainability of development outcomes in the ToH and RETT projects.

6

Learning and Forgetting: Knowledge transfers and Sustainability in TDC

The preceding chapters of this thesis have demonstrated that decolonization is an incomplete process in Zambia. This is because the country is still attempting to use technical cooperation to address its skilled labour and knowledge gaps in the civil service and industrial sector, which are the legacies of restrictive colonial education and training policies. Zambian policy elites primarily want to use Southern policy experiences as cost-effective blueprints to refine longstanding development plans and to accelerate industrial modernity. However, knowledge transfers in TDC have the potential to constrain country ownership by domesticating global policy experiences that do not adequately address Zambia's political and economic context and/or influencing how the country's most pressing development problems can be solved. This chapter makes an important contribution to debates about country ownership by demonstrating the ways in which Zambia uses appropriation and hybridization of policy experiences to negotiate and contest its development partner's power to intervene in the local development landscape through TDC.

The chapter also contributes to debates on country ownership through an exploration of the factors that have affected the sustainability of development outcomes from TDC projects and the wider implications for development effectiveness in Zambia. It examines how outcomes related to economic policy reforms are easily reversed or erased when changes take place in the domestic political terrain and bureaucratic structures. This is because all stakeholders leave responsibility for maintaining the skills and knowledge acquired with the beneficiary partner based on the notion of country ownership, but Zambia does not have sufficient measures in place to ensure that institutional memory is retained. Subsequently, even though Zambia has obtained observable outcomes such as the solar energy centre of excellence from the China-Zambia renewable energy technology transfer (RETT) project and the development of

a master plan for multi-facility economic zones (MFEZs) from the Triangle of Hope (ToH) project, the chapter argues that the knowledge transfer process in TDC is flawed because Zambia is trapped in a cycle of learning and forgetting, and self-reliance remains unattainable. The findings also provide further evidence that that Zambia is less disempowered by the geopolitics of TDC and more by internal dynamics.

Knowledge hierarchies and the hybrid nature of development planning

A history of colonial governance and the perpetuation of specific hierarchies and inequalities through international development cooperation initially embedded the notion that post-colonial Zambia should learn from Northern countries in order to attain industrial modernity. Later, the notion that technical cooperation from other developing countries could provide context-relevant knowledge to build Zambia's human resource capacity gained ground, following the emergence of dependency theory in the late 1960s. Dependency theory also promoted the idea that collaborating and learning from the experiences of other developing countries could strengthen Zambia's ability to generate internal development solutions, to delink from its dependence on Northern technical expertise and eventually become self-reliant (Shaw 1976; Chan 1992). There is some resistance to this knower-learner approach to development thinking amongst some development practitioners and it has been criticised by development scholars (e.g. Crush 1995; Baaz 2005). However, the notion of utilising South-South technical cooperation to support local capacity building, economic growth and self-reliance is still prominent in the Zambian imaginary of development.

The current structures of TDC are also helping to reinforce the fundamental problems associated with positioning the beneficiary country as the learner in development partnerships, instead of disabling them. This is because the knowledge, technology and finances are still flowing in one direction – from the development cooperation

providers to the beneficiary partner. For instance, when I enquired what development cooperation providers had learnt from them, most Zambian key stakeholders in the ToH project stated that their partners had learnt nothing at all from them, while those in the RETT project stated that Chinese institutions learnt how to collaborate with African partners and manage cultural differences. Zambian stakeholders did not appear to believe that their development partners were superior to them but that they were in possession of the technical expertise or resources that they required. They explicitly emphasised that their objectives when participating in the ToH and RETT projects were not to impart any knowledge to their Malaysian and Chinese partners, but to acquire specialist knowledge from them (that is, attracting foreign direct investment and developing/maintenance of renewable energy technologies). The fact that the development cooperation providers are not learning from the beneficiary country in these projects indicates that policy narratives that claim TDC supports mutual learning and horizontality are not reflected in development practice and outcomes in Zambia.

Knowledge transfers in TDC are also more complicated than assumed since the ToH and RETT projects have enabled China, Malaysia and Japan to promote East Asian models of economic development as alternatives to the Washington Consensus model, and thereby advance the ‘dewesternization’ of development thinking in Zambia. The ToH and RETT projects have also facilitated the domestication of global development policies such as the private sector development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in doing so, notions of what are the most pressing development needs in Zambia. As Chapter Two pointed out, these global policies work against country ownership by overlooking the needs and realities of individual countries. In addition, these policies perpetuate narratives of success and failure in the global South by focusing on economic growth indicators but disregard the conditions and activities in developing countries that operate outside the global capitalist economic framework (Brooks 2017). For this reason, it is important to scrutinise the source of development interventions introduced through TDC, especially given that the use of policy conditionalities in North-South cooperation took significant control of development planning away from beneficiary countries during the Structural

Adjustment era. However, there is a real risk of infantilising beneficiary countries if we assume that its development cooperation providers have an overwhelming influence over their national development planning.

As Adriana Abdenur (2019) points out, the beneficiary country does not passively accept and replicate all policy experiences transferred in South-South technical cooperation, instead it uses appropriation and hybridization to manage the introduction of external interventions into the local development landscape. Abdenur (2019, p.45) specifically draws on the concept of anthropophagy (or cannibalism) as a metaphor for explaining how the beneficiary partner exercises agency, consisting of action and of reflection, by selectively ingesting and digesting parts of the ‘other’ before regurgitating them into something new. The outcome is one of hybridity in which, mirroring processes of resistance outlined by Bhabha (2004), the beneficiary country contests and negotiates the power of its development partners to transfer their cultural practices by modifying these practices to suit local needs or contexts. Similarly, Zambian stakeholders in the ToH project selectively ‘devoured’ and regurgitated policy experiences from their Malaysian partners:

In the ToH Action Plans, there were suggestions on how to encourage small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) development based on the Malaysian experience but it did not match the local context. For example, Malaysia has more job opportunities than the population of its skilled labour force, but Zambia has high unemployment and a shortage of skilled labour in some sectors. As a result, we found that most of the recommendations that the Malaysian consultant provided based on his country context in this sector were not suitable for Zambia, so we did not implement them. However, Malaysia’s development experience was a good model for Zambia to learn from more generally because it still faces some of the challenges found in developing countries like ours. (Interview with ToH Project Coordinator, 17 January 2018)

Mr K from the ToH Banking and Finance taskforce corroborated the above statement from the ToH Project Coordinator and clarified that the Zambian government was still

able to draw on knowledge gained from the Malaysian experience to come up with alternative policy reforms to encourage SME development after the ToH project had ended (Interview, 28 February 2018). Another sign of beneficiary agency is that an external proposal for TDC is more likely to be ‘ingested’ in Zambia if it aligns with local views on how development problems can be addressed, such as how the promotion of solar energy technologies in the RETT project aligned with plans for rural electrification. In addition, evidence from the RETT project indicate that beneficiary partners only accept technical training and policy recommendations that they feel align with local plans or needs:

The project plan did not prescribe the type of technological and institutional capacity building that should be undertaken in the project, so this opened up space for us to work out what we want. Each partner had different views on capacity building. The Danish Programme Manager at UNDP China had a different perspective on the type of training that we needed and even our Chinese partners had their own views. However, we also prescribed what we wanted to get out of the training. For example, last year when we sent people to China for solar and small hydropower training, we sent a write-up of the kind of training that we wanted them to receive... In these kinds of partnerships, you need to understand what is best for each one of you. The Chinese can be pushy. Always trying to push their own agenda. Like even during the planning for the small hydropower demonstration plant we’ve had cases where they feel “we need to do this,” but we also give them the perspective from the Zambian side to show them that their dynamics are different and ours. For example, our demographics are different. In China, a small community can be a million people but when we take the small hydropower plant to Serenje district the population size there will only be a few hundred, so we need to adjust to the different conditions. The Chinese feel that maybe everything including the policies that work there can work here, when the truth is that some of them cannot. (Interview with RETT Project Manager, 22 September 2017)

These are all important examples of how *Zambian* stakeholders exercised agency and negotiated power inequalities. However, as Islam (2012, p. 169) points out, while anthropophagy is a useful concept for understanding how actors position themselves with regards to an ‘other’, it cannot easily be employed to negotiate contradictions within the ‘self.’ Consequently, *Zambian* bureaucrats who participated in the ToH and RETT projects were successful at employing anthropophagy or hybridity to negotiate the power that development cooperation providers have to introduce external interventions in the local development landscape. However, they were not as successful at employing this strategy when negotiating internal power struggles with senior policymakers and politicians who have authority to shape national development planning and the execution of development projects. The interference of the senior leadership has significantly affected the sustainability of development outcomes from the Triangle of Hope (ToH) project as changes in the political leadership have resulted in the modification of national policies, staff turnover in the civil service and, subsequently, loss of institutional memory.

The struggle for sustainable development and self-reliance

All research informants on the ToH and RETT projects were of the view that the beneficiary partner has overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluating project activities and for ensuring the sustainability of any development outcomes, based on the notion that this is a part of country ownership. However, findings indicate that there are limits to which inclusive national ownership of development interventions can result in sustainable development in a country such as *Zambia*, where decision-making power is highly centralised and politicised. The politicisation of development planning has occurred in *Zambia* since the Kenneth Kaunda presidency (1964-1991). This has meant that the president, cabinet ministers and members of the ruling political party can interfere in policymaking and negotiations for development projects even though specific government agencies, including the Ministry of Finance, have the

official mandate to manage national development planning and development cooperation. However, a common view amongst informants is that political interference in national development planning from senior leadership was not a problem during the Levy Mwanawasa administration (2001-2008), which most described as the most visionary and productive period in Zambia's recent history. However, key stakeholders on the ToH project attributed the interference of leaders that have come to power after President Mwanawasa's death in 2008 for subsequent changes in national policies, high staff turnover in the civil service and the loss of institutional memory on the Triangle of Hope:

Leadership is very important when it comes to policy. If Mwanawasa had not died things would have really changed. For real development to occur you need a leader like him with an analytical mind and who can take things far...President Sata lacked an analytical mind that is why things fell apart. The proposals and recommendations developed from the Triangle of Hope were good and well planned. Like the ToH Action Plan to develop a health diagnostics centre, that could treat both local people and health tourists from neighbouring countries. That was a very good document but the problem is it just wasn't implemented. It is now probably gathering dust on some shelf somewhere at the Ministry of Health. (Interview with Mr I, ToH Health taskforce member, 13 February 2018)

I have always said that things would have really changed in Zambia if we didn't lose Levy Mwanawasa as President. He had a vision and passion for change and even aggressively sought it.... There has always been a lack of continuity in development planning with every change in government ever since the Kaunda-Chiluba transition in 1991. Each leader has dropped policies or programmes that the previous administration worked on, even the good ones! Rupiah Banda had his own ideas on how things should be done in the ToH project when he became president. Then President Sata also made changes. Each of these leaders has also brought changes to the cabinet and government ministries. There is a need for strong institutions but what we have

are strong men and when they go everything falls apart. You can see that they have strong institutions in the United States and that is why President Trump cannot just do whatever he wants. There are strong checks and balances. The institutions remain strong even though there is a change in leadership. (Interview with the JICA Programme Officer, 5 February 2018)

The challenges that a change in political leadership create in sustaining development outcomes are not unique to Zambia. Nordtveit's (2009) study of World Bank-funded literacy projects in Senegal, also found that development interventions can only stand the test of time if there is stable political leadership. This argument was based on findings that indicated that the passion of Senegal's delegate cabinet minister for literacy had a positive impact on civil service morale and the implementation of development projects in the 1990s. However, the minister's departure from this post in addition to staff turnover and widespread political instability led to the decay of institutional memory and national literacy levels (Nordtveit 2009, pp.29-32). In the case of Zambia, studies such as Hinfelaar and Sichone (2019) support key stakeholder arguments that the implementation of the ToH Action Plans have been negatively affected by the inconsistent and repeated policy changes successive leaders have made since 2012. Extensive executive interference in policymaking, negotiations for development projects and foreign investment agreements in the infrastructure and energy sectors, has particularly worked against the ToH Action Plans that eased the cost of doing business and improved the investment climate. For example, the JICA Programme Officer pointed out that ZDA has introduced a paid membership scheme for registered businesses in order to raise extra revenue, but this has increased operating costs for businesses because they have to pay a similar membership fee to the local chamber of commerce (Interview, 5 February 2018).

Political patronage rather than merit has become the primary driver of appointments in Zambia's civil service in recent years (Hinfelaar and Sichone 2019). However, there are no protection mechanisms to support civil servants whose advice opposes the

views of the senior leadership and is not well received. This has led to several civil servants being forced into early retirement, redundancy or transferred to work in remote rural districts. These actions have negatively affected the civil service's capacity to engage in strategic planning and gradually reversed the gains made by the ToH project in improving the efficiency of the civil service to manage economic development (see Chapter Four). The FDI promotion capacities of the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry (MCTI) and Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) have also been significantly weakened as participants in the Triangle of Hope have departed and taken institutional memory with them. An examination of the *Seventh National Development Plan 2017-21* reveals that the main structural reforms that the government has set out to encourage private sector development include:

Reducing the cost of doing business is key for stimulating growth. The reform area will be on streamlining business registration, licensing and granting of incentives. Furthermore, the Government will accelerate the implementation of measures aimed at improving the general business environment and making the country a prime destination for investment and wealth creation. In addition, the Government will continue with programmes and reforms aimed at growing SMEs. The Government will also provide the requisite incentives to the private sector for industrialisation and export diversification (MNDP 2017, p.46)

The problem is that significant progress was made on addressing all of these issues during the ToH project, but they were reversed through reforms instituted by successive administrations. The fact the Zambian government is currently reproducing its previous strategies indicates a trend in which Zambia keeps learning but then forgetting. One of the main reasons it struggles with development amnesia is there are not enough measures in place to ensure that the knowledge acquired from technical cooperation is disseminated and retained within the relevant institutions in Zambia.

Loss of institutional memory

We need institutional memory to ensure continuity of government programmes and to ensure effective and sustainable development. There is also a need for reporting so that the government can keep track of project activities. Because it is a waste of time and resources for the donor and the recipient country if activities are not continued. The government receives a lot of support from its different donors but nothing is changing. There are so many cooperating partners that supported the Private Sector Development Reform Programme (PSDRP), which complemented the Triangle of Hope. However, we have found that the levels of FDI flowing into Zambia, which was increasing during the implementation of the ToH project, have dropped or remained stagnant since it ended in 2012 (Interview with the JICA Programme Officer, 5 February 2018)

This statement about institutional memory from the JICA Programme Officer points to the importance of long-standing arguments about the urgency of ensuring knowledge and technology transfers are maintained in the beneficiary country (e.g. Matthews 1987). The ToH project generated significant knowledge on how Zambia could attract and steer domestic/foreign investment towards stimulating growth and/or addressing development needs in diverse socio-economic sectors. However, as discussed previously, no official report was produced of the ToH project by any of the key implementing institutions in Zambia such as the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry (MCTI) and Zambia Development Agency (ZDA). In addition, bureaucrats who participated in the project at these institutions have either retired or transferred to other agencies after the project end date. I also found that knowledge on the ToH project at the Zambia Chamber of Commerce Trade and Industry (ZACCI), which was the primary private sector representative, has also disappeared with staff turnover. Significantly, most of the knowledge and skills that Zambia gained during the ToH project has gradually been lost over the last 8 years.

It is important to note that loss of institutional memory due to staff turnover is a common problem in international development cooperation, in government, non-

governmental and private sector organisations (see Kontinen 2018). Even the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) lacks a reputable system to retain the knowledge it acquires from development projects, which has affected its ability to understand the full extent of South-South/trilateral cooperation and provide support to beneficiary countries (Interview with UNOSSC Policy Analyst, 23 October 2018). Nevertheless, the costs of an institution failing to retain valuable knowledge can sometimes be very high for developing countries. Take, for example, de Holan *et al.*'s (2004, p.47) case study of how the Central Bank of Argentina had to frantically access archives and ask former employees to locate knowledge on how to enact strategic responses, such as floating currency, when the government ordered it to manage the country's monetary policy in the midst of a severe recession and debt crisis in 2002. However, the Central Bank found that it had lost all its knowledge on how to manage some specialist areas such as foreign trade and the exchange rate, and this undermined Argentina's ability to overcome its economic crisis.

In the case of Zambia, staff turnover at key stakeholder institutions involved in the ToH project has significantly weakened the country's ability to attract foreign investment and steer it towards its long-term goal of diversifying the economy away from a dependence on copper production. This can be seen from how ZDA and MCTI asked the Japanese Government to provide Investment Promotion Advisors to assist them in specialist areas in which they lacked skills, yet capacity building during the Triangle of Hope project had provided former employees at these institutions with the same skills (Interview with JICA Programme Officer, 5 February 2018). This indicates that even though the Zambian government contributed significant time, financial and human resources towards the ToH project and 'got what it wanted' in the form of technical skills and know-how, it did not put in place enough measures to retain these skills and knowledge and ensure that it becomes self-reliant. According to JICA, Zambia's failure to sustain the ToH project outcome is the main reason its ex-post evaluation categorised the project as unsatisfactory, "although in the report it wrote 'partially satisfactory' as a way of being diplomatic" (Interview with JICA Programme Officer, 5 February 2018).

The sustainability of the development outcomes obtained from the RETT project are also at risk of a similar fate. This is because measures to retain institutional memory through report writing and to communicate the RETT project's overall goals, including its links with national development plans and with other government agencies, were not put in place in Zambia. Most knowledge on the RETT project activities is held by members of the National Steering Committee from UNDP, the Ministry of Energy and the University of Zambia, but their colleagues at these key stakeholder institutions have little or no knowledge on the project:

The Head of the department is aware about our activities. We have different specialized research groups in the department but we don't share information on our project at meetings. We chat a bit about the project with our colleagues when we meet in the corridor, but we don't concern ourselves with things like writing reports (Interview with members of solar energy centre excellence PMU, 25 September 2017)

I think almost everyone in the Ministry of Energy knows about the project because my other colleagues also participate in the technical committee for this project. We also have a system where quarterly reports and annual reports are produced where anyone who wants information on a project can access the file. We also have meetings where we present ongoing issues on different projects. So in relation to institutional memory, I would say most members of the department are privy to what is going and no one can say later they were not aware. Although that is not to say everyone is actually involved in the day-to-day activities of the project. (Interview with Ministry of Energy RETT PMU member, 27 February 2018)

I will be frank my impression after working on this project for only a few months is that a lot of knowledge about the project has been lost, specifically because of staff turnover in all the project management units.... We have found that it takes time for new people to learn about the project and to run with it. The change in project personnel means that new trust has to be developed. That

is why we have been forced to extend the project timeline. Probably one of the main challenges I can identify in trilateral partnerships, which is not project related but rather country-to-country related, is the need to establish the necessary trust between the different institutions which are implementing the project. (Interview with UNDP China RETT Programme Manager, 7 September 2018)

The institutions involved in the RETT project have not only gained knowledge about renewable energies but also vital knowledge concerning how Zambia can strategically manage South-South/trilateral projects as a beneficiary partner. It is not clear if the lack of reporting on development cooperation activities is part of the wider SSC trend of securing national sovereignty by ‘controlling the unknown.’ The Zambian government’s power to control knowledge about what is happening in the local development landscape is similar to how dominant states block narratives to retain power in global politics. However, a lack of reporting and poor communication within government agencies will compound the loss of institutional knowledge in these areas once participating officials depart. This is a challenge which seems already to have begun given the UNDP China Programme Manager’s statement above. It is not clear if the government will develop a plan to address these challenges in its planned revision of the *2007 Zambia Aid and Policy Strategy*. However, as discussed in Chapter Five, a senior civil servant at the Ministry of Finance (Mr K) pointed out that he felt any strategy to improve Zambia’s role in future TDC projects is constrained by the power inequalities that finances create in the relationship between the development cooperation provider and the beneficiary partner. He also argued that the main reason government agencies tend not to write reports after the end of a project’s lifecycle is because they are understaffed:

I’m not surprised if you say that JICA is the only one who has written reports on the Triangle of Hope and there is nothing from the government. OECD monitoring and evaluation measures are very time consuming and the

transaction costs are too high. However, there is also the issue of us not having adequate staff to deal with reporting on development projects. Once a project is done we have many other responsibilities to manage. There are also several practical issues that affect the sustainability of project activities after completion. Most of them are related to practices that started in the 1990s when Northern donors started proposing a lot of projects. First, donors tend to request that the government second some staff from a related ministry to work on a project or that a project is embedded in a government agency. The civil servants working on the project receive their monthly government salary and an allowance for their project work. However, when the project finishes they stop getting that allowance so they have no incentive and interest in continuing any project-related activities. They just view it as an extra responsibility on top of their normal workload. Second, in some other cases, you find that project consultants from donor countries receive a higher salary and more allowances for comparable work with their Zambian counterparts. This creates low morale amongst Zambian officials and a lack of commitment to monitoring, evaluation and writing reports on project activities after the official end date of the project. (Interview with ToH Banking and Finance taskforce member, 28 February 2018)

Several studies on the Structural Adjustment era support Mr K's argument that the parallel work systems created by Northern donors affected the efficiency of African bureaucracies and the morale of civil servants (e.g. Saasa and Carlsson 1996; Mkandawire and Soludo 1999). His claim that these practices continue to affect feelings of ownership and the sustainability of outcomes at the institutional scale in TDC further underscores the argument here that TDC does not occur in a vacuum but is affected by the legacy of past partnerships. However, the JICA Programme Officer was of the view that the commitment of some civil servants towards monitoring and evaluation of project activities is less about donor actions and more about their personal attitude. He emphasised that:

There is a need for people to change their mind-set and attitude towards work for any trilateral development project to work. Government officials should be committed to their work whether there is an opportunity for them to earn extra money or not (Interview, 5 February 2018).

There is no doubt that civil servants should be committed to fulfilling their responsibilities without requiring additional financial incentives. However, arguments about how they only work when motivated by financial incentives and the need to change their attitude towards work can be traced to stereotypes about the inadequacy of African people that were embedded in colonial education. As postcolonial debates on trusteeship have pointed out, the civilising mission of colonial administrations was driven by Orientalist assumptions that people in non-Western societies are lazy, unreliable and cannot be trusted to attain progress without guidance (Mercer et al. 2003; Baaz 2005). It has been observed that many governments, organisations and technical experts in the international development sector have mimicked the idea that there is a need to enhance the capacity or ‘will to improve’ of people who are beneficiaries of their development programmes (Li 2007; Power 2019). This approach to development planning was also internalised by Zambia’s post-independence policy and intellectual elites. The discourse in the country’s first set of national development plans clearly indicates that the Zambian government considers mind-set change a necessary measure to improve the population’s capacity to facilitate industrial modernity. For example, the *Report on Manpower, Education, Training and Zambianisation 1965-1966* states,

Widespread development depends on attitudes and quality education and training, as well as the number of persons with a particular type of skill. However, a first-rate education and training by itself is not enough in a technologically-oriented world, skills become obsolete quickly. Therefore, a country’s manpower must be dynamic, continuously enterprising, creative and inventive in order to keep pace. A sense of involvement and achievement is also necessary. Development means hard work, persistence and initiative as well as knowledge. Although not easily measured, these attitudes are as

essential as skills. Furthermore, they are something which everyone, of whatever level of education or skill, can provide. The task of development is to mobilise every person for the fullest efforts which his abilities and background make him capable (Cabinet Office 1966, p.vi).

The report goes on to emphasise that the government intended to remedy its people's "attitudes which reflect the values of the colonial and traditional past, and often fostered prejudice against technical skills and manual work, rather than emphasising the needs of development in an independent Zambia" (Cabinet Office 1966, p.1). However, this thesis has demonstrated that failure is not always failure since beneficiaries occasionally use inaction or a lack of commitment to project plans, to block development interventions that do not match with their vision. Therefore, this Cabinet Office statement raises important questions about whether the government directed its citizens to adapt to a form of development that conflicts with their values, needs and visions of progress or well-being. The answer is far beyond the scope of this research. However, the notion that Zambians need to change their mind-set towards work is still prominent in development thinking and has even been strengthened by its prominence in cultural explanations for the rapid economic development of East Asian countries. For example, the *Seventh National Development Plan 2017-21* uses South Korea's trajectory to emphasise the fundamental impact that a change in people's mind-set to work can have on a country's development. It argues that Zambians will also have to change their mind-set, "this will include, but not limited to, institutional and family values, work culture, self-reliance, partnerships, transparency, innovativeness, harnessing of social capital, result-orientation and public accountability" (MNDP 2017, p.34).

In light of such statements, the JICA Programme Officer's comments on the need for civil servants to undergo a change in mind-set towards how they approach work, would not be considered particularly controversial in Zambian policy circles. However, the ToH Project Coordinator raised an important counterpoint in these

debates about civil service efficiency and mind-set change. He argued that the Zambian civil service's capacity to engage in strategic planning has been hampered by the transformation of post-independence civil service training institutions such as the National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA) and the President's Citizenship College (PCC) into public tertiary institutions (Interview, 17 January 2018). This is the reason that civil service efficiency and capacity building were cornerstones of the conceptual framework aimed at re-engineering the management of the national economy in the ToH project (see Figure 5). Unfortunately, as this chapter has shown, the erosion of political will at the national scale has had a significant impact on the civil service's capacity to ensure the sustainability of development outcomes from the ToH project at the institutional scale. This highlights the challenges involved with TDC projects that promote government ownership of development and the need to take political will and individual attitudes towards work into account in debates on beneficiary country ownership. It will be important for future TDC projects to develop mitigating measures to these challenges since this research shown they significantly hampered Zambia's ability to secure sustainable development outcomes from the ToH project and its objective of developing a skilled labour force that can fill all capacity gaps in the civil service and industrial sectors.

Beneficiary recommendations for enhancing TDC

Despite the diverse challenges found in TDC, this study is committed to not only highlighting 'subaltern voices' in order to understand their approach to partnership and their views on global politics, but also drawing attention to their ideas on how different stakeholders can navigate partnerships and enhance the development effectiveness of TDC. Many of the recommendations put forward by key stakeholders in the ToH and RETT projects concentrate on the technical aspects of a trilateral partnership. For example, the ToH Project Coordinator and the ToH Banking and Finance taskforce member (Mr K) emphasised the importance of using the beneficiary country's financial systems to channel project funds instead of donor systems. They

both contended that this would help to reduce the sense of donor paternalism and encourage feelings of ownership over TDC projects amongst stakeholders in the beneficiary country. In addition, the solar centre of excellence Project Manager suggested that academic and technical institutions involved in TDC should take planning meetings more seriously. He cautioned that his team lost out on an opportunity to ensure their centre was allocated a sufficient portion of the RETT project budget by missing project planning meetings.

Key stakeholders on the ToH and RETT projects also had several suggestions on how partner countries can manage the power relations and politics in TDC. Most significant is the idea that promoting self-interests is a function of development cooperation and, therefore, the beneficiary partner must have a strategy for ensuring it can secure its desired objectives from TDC.

One thing I can say about these kinds of projects like the Triangle of Hope is that donors do not want the aid and trade relationship with developing countries to change at the end of it. Therefore, even though the ToH project's overall objective was to improve the trade and investment climate in the country, I would say the donors [Japan and Malaysia] aim was not to stimulate real development in Zambia to the extent that it could change the trade and aid relationship. If we are importing a lot from them, then they would still want it to remain that way at the end of the project. That is why I said we need to know what we want when negotiating for and planning development projects, and we must also have an idea of what our cooperating partner wants. You know their inner or ulterior motive for proposing the project. That way, if it is not good for us than we can go to another country. Because there is no shortage of cooperating partners nowadays. (Interview with the ToH Project Coordinator, 17 January 2018)

In line with this argument, stakeholders in the RETT project emphasised the importance of a beneficiary partner being assertive when dealing with influential Southern cooperation providers such as China. This is because they felt their Chinese

partners were trying to push their own agenda and interests. The solar centre of excellence Project Manager pointed to a nearby building to emphasise his argument that China is not providing development cooperation to Zambia purely for charity but with the additional motive of increasing its soft power influence:

You can see the Chinese influence outside there at the Confucius Centre. Every time you come into University of Zambia through the main entrance it's the first thing you see, which doesn't always make me happy. I mean they are good at construction and fast. But people say it's almost like they bought their way here. Apparently, they invited the Vice-Chancellor to China and gave him an award for something, and soon after that, he gave them the approval to build the centre. The Chinese are very good at making their presence felt through strategic projects. I mean there are so many places on campus that the Confucius Centre could have been located, but they put it right in the front.³⁴ (Interview with solar energy centre of excellence Project Manager, 30 January 2018)

In addition to these concerns about ulterior motives, stakeholders in the RETT project stressed that beneficiary countries should be cautious and responsive to how development cooperation providers may attempt to impose their work culture on the overall project management:

I have interacted the most with the Chinese as the RETT Project Manager in Zambia. However, I don't speak Chinese so communication has been a challenge. There was a Chinese project manager who had problems with

³⁴ There are widespread concerns China is using Confucius institutes as vehicles for increasing its soft power influence and surveillance activities. However, Confucius institutes have also become a key source of knowledge on East Asian culture for African countries. See Einashe, I. (2018) 'How Mandarin is conquering Africa via Confucius Institutes and giving China a soft-power advantage,' *South China Morning Post*, 16 May 2018, available: <https://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/article/2146368/how-mandarin-conquering-africa-confucius-institutes-and-giving-china-soft>.

speaking English but she has left now. There are two seniors officials who have always worked on the project and two young women have joined them who are able to speak English quite fluently. So things are a bit easier but communication is still a challenge when it comes to issues such as poor internet connectivity when using Skype to have meetings. The Chinese also have a different culture and way of doing things. They like to keep things to themselves and then on short notice they start telling you that they want certain things to be done. So we've spent a lot of time managing the communication part of this project, especially since there is a similar South-South renewable energy technology project taking place in Ghana. We try to have meetings together as Zambia, China, Ghana and UNDP. (Interview with the RETT Project Manager, 22 September 2017)

This suggests that a strategy to manage cultural differences between the different institutions participating in TDC should be established at the beginning of every project. The importance of investing time in establishing trust, communication and a common understanding amongst project partners were also reiterated by RETT project partners from UNDP China and Denmark:

The coordination aspect has been a very time consuming thing around these trilateral projects. It requires a lot of patience especially when things are not going the way that they should. You can kind of expect that when you have three countries all with different political interests and when the projects are being implemented at the national level by different government ministries, with three very different cultures. I think the cultural aspect is very important in TDC. This project has dealt with three countries [China, Zambia and Ghana] that have a very limited understanding of each other's culture, ways of working and engaging. For instance, China is very keen on doing things the Chinese way and when they travel abroad, that does not always resonate very well with the other countries and vice versa. In a way that is a normal part of managing a development project. However, for this project, the amount of time spent on making people talk and actually trying to make people do what they were asked

to do, has been quite a challenge. (Interview with UNDP China Programme Manager, 7 September 2018)

It is very important that all the partners involved agree on the terms and conditions of a project, including co-creation of the project, cost-sharing, criteria for success, clear implementation plans and outcomes, standards, responsibilities, joint monitoring and evaluation. A common and agreed understanding of these factors will facilitate a strengthened ownership by all involved parties. It is also important to map out the needs and wishes of the recipient countries as well as considering the overall donor/project landscape so that activities complement rather than overlap. (Email communication with Danida Advisor, 9 December 2018)

The importance of critical planning skills and civil service efficiency in the beneficiary country are additional issues that stand out, with regards to enhancing ownership of TDC. As mentioned earlier, the ToH Project Coordinator suggested that beneficiary partner must make an effort to understand the underlying motives of their development cooperation providers and then craft a strategy for negotiating and planning TDC projects. In recent years, policymakers have also begun to call for greater introspection on how Zambia can benefit from its development partnerships, especially those involving China. A junior parliamentarian recently emphasised that “We need to understand what we are not doing right so that we can make sure that our dealings, especially with China, are ringing the necessary dividends that will trickle-down to the Zambian people” (Kalito 2018). This aligns with ongoing debates on African agency and its shifting dependency from Western countries to East Asia (e.g. Agbebi and Virtanen 2017). However, another insightful argument on the role of TDC, and development cooperation more generally, in Zambia’s development landscape was expressed by the ToH Project Coordinator:

We do not actually need donor funds for projects like this, and the truth is that we already have most of the necessary skills and the plans to implement them. We just need to manage our resources properly. (Interview, 17 January 2018)

This is a line of thinking that has gained prominence in several African countries since 2005, after debt relief and increased income from commodity exports increased the space for governments to take control of national policymaking. It especially gained traction amongst Zambian intellectual and policy elites after Damibisa Moyo published her renowned thesis *Dead Aid*. Moyo (2009) argued for African countries to concentrate on mobilising finances from trade and investments to achieve their national development plans, and to reduce their reliance on foreign aid, which she suggested diminishes government accountability and fuels financial mismanagement. However, JICA's Programme Officer was less optimistic about the possibility of change in Zambia as long as a lack of political will from senior government leaders and weak institutional memory continue to hamper civil service efficiency and the suitability of development outcomes. His advice to other donors contemplating the idea of engaging in TDC projects in Zambia is blunt:

To donors, I would say: do you really want to support a government that is not committed to real change? Any donor that embarks on a development project here should be prepared to find that the outcomes will not be sustained after a project is completed. So they should ask themselves whether it is worth even providing support in the first place. (Interview, 5 February 2018)

In spite of this gloomy outlook on partnerships, the notion that Zambia has sufficient resources, and does not really need assistance from its development cooperation providers, also suggests that the disinterest and inaction exhibited by some bureaucrats in TDC projects is not only an attempt for them to block and control the development interventions introduced in the country, but a sign of their ambivalence. On the one hand, they recognise that the country has challenges that hamper its effort to reduce poverty and achieve its vision of industrial modernity, such as weaknesses in its human

and institutional capacity, and therefore it needs development cooperation. On the other hand, they recognise that some development projects can be financed with domestic resources. This makes them less concerned about the potential losses incurred from a donor-funded project failing or project outcomes not being sustained through their inaction because they can self-finance alternative projects or negotiate for support from the diverse pool of development cooperation providers available. What is left to be seen is if they can transform the increased space to exercise agency and to control the introduction of development interventions into strategies that ensure sustainable development and improved well-being for the citizens of their country.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that institutional actors in the beneficiary country engage in a form of anthropophagy (cannibalism) or the hybridization of policy experiences to control the development cooperation provider's power to introduce external development interventions through TDC. However, they are not as successful at employing these strategies when contesting and negotiating internal power struggles with senior policymakers and politicians, who have the authority to interfere in development planning and civil service appointments. More specifically, development outcomes gained from the ToH project have not been sustained due to frequent changes in the senior political leadership and corresponding changes made to national policies and civil service personnel. These challenges also threaten the sustainability of development outcomes from the RETT project, given that measures to retain institutional memory are not prioritised. Consequently, any knowledge gained from South-South/trilateral development cooperation in Zambia is gradually erased and long-term capacity development and self-reliance are not being achieved.

Despite the prominence of 'equality' and 'mutual respect' in policy discourses on TDC, the chapter has demonstrated that postcolonial debates on trusteeship and the inadequacy of African peoples are still relevant for the study of TDC. Some key stakeholders on the ToH and RETT projects focussed on 'getting what they wanted'

out of each intervention and did not prioritise monitoring and sustaining the project outcomes in the long-term. This led, some of Zambia's development partners to suggest that there is a need for a significant change of mind-set and desire for change at all levels of the beneficiary government. This argument is also prominent in current and past national development plans dating back to Zambia's independence in 1964, which indicates that echoes of its colonial past are still resonating in the present. Significantly, the research has also found that Zambian stakeholders are not passively observing these challenges, but also have diverse suggestions for how the development effectiveness of TDC can be improved. This underscores the benefits of listening to 'subaltern' voices in order to understand both their approach to international development cooperation and their ideas on how global challenges can be resolved.

Conclusions

The research informing this thesis set out to provide an empirically rich and theoretically informed analysis of a beneficiary country's perspective on how the politics of partnership affects country ownership of trilateral development cooperation (TDC). To achieve this objective it employed an institutional ethnography, based on key stakeholder interviews and archival analysis, to capture the beneficiary perspective of country ownership and partnerships. It also engaged with postcolonial perspectives on power, agency and knowledge production to demonstrate the significance of opening up to alternative explanations on TDC from beneficiary countries who are 'subaltern' in geopolitics. A postcolonial lens also enabled a deeper understanding of how power and agency operate in the production and dissemination of development knowledge. The research focused on scrutinising three of the dominant narratives used to promote TDC in development texts and policy spaces such as the United Nations BAPA+40 or the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) (see OECD 2017; UNDP 2017a; UN 2019). The first narrative presents TDC as a 'win-win' modality that supports country ownership and equality between all partners. The second credits the low levels of beneficiary country ownership that have been observed in some TDC projects (in terms of leadership over the design, implementation and evaluation) to weaknesses in the beneficiary's human and institutional capacity. The third narrative presents TDC as a modality that enhances development effectiveness and efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Research into TDC projects in Zambia has demonstrated that these policy narratives do not accurately reflect the reality of development practice nor that there are many ways of understanding country ownership. Policy narratives tend to focus on the technical aspects of TDC and neutralise its political dimension. However, this thesis has shown that beneficiary ownership is significantly influenced by power inequalities, changes in political leadership, conflicting stakeholder interests within the beneficiary country and in its relationship with the development cooperation

provider. This chapter reviews and synthesizes the overall research findings to argue that the beneficiary country can achieve effective development outcomes (that is, real and observable) from TDC initiatives, despite the complex politics of partnership. However, Zambia's ability to ensure the sustainability of these development outcomes is hindered to a large extent by its internal dynamics rather than the geopolitics of development. This chapter also examines the wider implications of these research findings on the changing geographies of global power and development.

Country ownership and the politics of partnership

One of the main objectives of the research was to provide a deeper understanding of the nature of partnerships developed through trilateral development cooperation. This thesis utilises theoretical concepts derived from postcolonial theory to offer critical insight into the machinations of power within TDC, their linkages to the production and dissemination of development knowledge, and the significance of a more nuanced understanding of the exercise of beneficiary agency within the partnerships. The research suggests that there is enough evidence to support claims that TDC expands the space for the beneficiary partner to exercise leadership over the design, implementation and evaluation of development interventions, which is the definition of country ownership in global policy frameworks. Perceptions of country ownership in effective development cooperation frameworks also place considerable emphasis on the question of which partner voices the development concern and recommend that development interventions are most effective when the beneficiary partner initiates them. A comparison of experiences in the internally driven Triangle of Hope (ToH) project and the donor-driven China-Zambia renewable energy technology transfer (RETT) project suggests that the beneficiary partner shows more interest and is more active in TDC initiatives that are driven by its own demands.

Institutional ethnography (IE) also reveals that the institutional actors involved in the implementation of TDC in Zambia perceive and operationalise country ownership in a different manner. Specifically, some actors tend to limit their focus to 'getting what

they want' from a development intervention such as development knowledge or technologies. In the case of the ToH project, the desired goal was to secure knowledge about foreign investment promotion and economic diversification, while the objective in the RETT project was to secure expertise on the construction and maintenance of solar energy and small hydropower technologies. These actions are part of the diverse strategies bureaucrats developed and institutionalised in response to the hierarchal power relations between Zambia and its Northern development cooperation providers. These unequal power relations are rooted in the country's history of having undergone colonial governance and donor dominance during the 1980s and 1990s when it was significantly dependent on foreign aid. Northern donors extensively interfered in the Zambian development landscape by using the withdrawal and release of development cooperation as a disciplinary tool to influence national policymaking, especially the uptake of neoliberal economic reform and good governance. Northern donors also assigned their technical experts to lead development projects anchored in government departments or implemented as standalone projects, which contributed to weakening the civil service's efficiency and country ownership of development.

Chapter Two argues that the paternalism in Northern development cooperation is rooted in the colonial practice of trusteeship, which promotes the notion that people in the global South are incapable of managing their development and so there is a need to supervise and enhance their capacity for progress. This paternalistic approach to development cooperation has made self-determination, non-conditionality and self-reliance central concepts in post-colonial developing countries perspectives of country ownership. Dependency theory was particularly influential in convincing Zambian political and intellectual elites that the country can realise its desired vision of industrial modernity only if it breaks its economic and intellectual dependence on foreign countries and becomes self-reliant. In the past, this dependence was specifically on Northern countries due to the structural inequality that colonialism created in the national economy, such as its reliance on copper production, skilled labour shortages, and its inadequate transport and energy infrastructure. Therefore, like many other newly independent developing countries, Zambia engaged in South-South cooperation (SSC) in order to address these structural inequalities. Over the last

15 years, SSC from countries such as China, India and Saudi Arabia has become a significant source of support that has emboldened the Zambian government to denounce and gradually delink from 'the coloniality of power' that enabled its Northern partners to influence national policymaking. Tensions in the relationship between Zambia and its Northern partners reached a high point in 2011 such that several countries, including Denmark, phased out their bilateral development cooperation activities.

The rapid economic growth experienced in Zambia's Southern allies has also presented the country with an alternative to the British model of industrial modernity, which it has struggled to emulate since it attained independence. The Zambian government has developed a particular interest in replicating some of the policy experiences of East Asian countries. Consequently, although as Chapter Three has shown, Zambian bureaucrats perceive global policy discourses on South-South/trilateral cooperation to be an imaginary, they still participate in these modalities to access knowledge on the unique policies, programmes and technologies that have contributed to the economic development of East Asian countries. Key stakeholders in the ToH and RETT projects specifically emphasise that they want to 'learn' from their Malaysian and Chinese partners. They also point out that their overall goal is to use these projects to build local capacity in specialised areas (foreign investment promotion and renewable energy technologies) and subsequently reduce their dependence on foreign technical expertise to support operations in these areas.

Drawing on Walter Mignolo's (2012) concept of 'dewesternization', this thesis argues that Zambia's interest in East Asian models of economic development is a sign of the 'dewesternization' of development thinking that emerging powers have accelerated in the global South. It contends that Mignolo's arguments about how some Northern governments are making efforts to re-establish the legitimacy of Western knowledge systems can be seen through Denmark's underlying interest in the RETT project. Chapter Five demonstrates that Denmark used the RETT project as a vehicle to transfer its best practice on delivering development cooperation to China. This is part of its wider strategy to ensure that it becomes a much sought after intermediary in

South-South knowledge exchanges and, through these means, maintain its relevancy in the global development architecture (Danida 2012). Similarly, key stakeholders in the ToH project observed that Japan's underlying interest in supporting the project was to maintain its reputation as one of Africa's most important development cooperation providers. In the face of intense competition from China, this makes TDC an important vehicle for Japan to build its soft power influence and retain its status as a global power. Japan's promotion of Malaysia's development experiences in the ToH project also aligns with its approach of using TDC more generally to advance East Asian models of economic development. Despite their rivalry over leadership in the global development architecture, Japan and China both have an interest in establishing their individual models of East Asian industrial modernity as their beneficiary partners' preferred alternative to the Washington Consensus model. However, China is also using TDC to signal that it is capable of learning from and collaborating with Northern countries, to build its image as a responsible global actor and to counter narratives that suggest its development cooperation is predatory.

This brings us to the second research objective aimed at understanding the extent to which the politics of partnership supports or undermines beneficiary country ownership of trilateral development projects. Apart from the image building and soft power interests mentioned above, commercial opportunities are also a key driver of TDC. As discussed in Chapter Five, key stakeholders in the ToH and RETT projects assert that their Chinese and Malaysian partners' underlying interest in each project was to create a market for their domestic industries in Zambia. These goals align with the SSC approach of ensuring that any form of cooperation results in mutually beneficial relations. This includes enabling a development cooperation provider to obtain market access, trade and investment opportunities for their domestic industries. This approach to development cooperation initially attracted criticism from Northern cooperation providers who argued for altruism, but many have now adopted it and are explicitly blending development finances with their trade and investment agendas. This includes to a lesser degree Japan and Denmark in the ToH and RETT projects, respectively. However, both projects were also primarily aimed at promoting private

sector development in Zambia – a development agenda the country initially adopted as a policy condition from its Northern cooperation providers almost 20 years ago.

The promotion of the private sector development (PSD) agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by Zambia's development cooperation providers in the ToH and RETT projects constrained, to some extent, country ownership. This is because these global policy frameworks promote external ideas of what the most pressing development needs are and strategies/targets for how the country can address these needs (such as economic diversification and closing the gap in energy access). However, this research makes important contributions to the debates on beneficiary agency by demonstrating that the Zambian government does not engage in a blind acceptance of every donor proposal for TDC projects, but instead only supports the interventions that align with its views on how its development priorities can be addressed. This includes, for example, the promotion of solar energy technologies to address rural electrification in the RETT project. The Zambian government also asserts its sovereignty over the local development landscape through explicit acts of resistance and silent strategies, such as unenthusiastic participation in aid negotiations and project planning or non-implementation of agreed recommendations. Consequently, when it comes to understanding beneficiary agency, lack of action is not always a sign of capacity weaknesses or inadequacy, but is sometimes an active strategy to block the introduction of external development interventions that do not match the beneficiary country's vision. Chapter Six has shown that the concepts of anthropophagy (cannibalism) and hybridisation also provide critical insight into how beneficiary agency in the ToH and RETT projects involved reflection and action through the selective ingestion, digestion and appropriation of policy recommendations on East Asian models of economic development.

Zambia's participation in TDC is also shaped by its foreign policy concerns. As discussed in Chapter Five, Zambian stakeholders have taken several measures to protect the country's diplomatic relations with China and to sustain the easy flow of development cooperation and economic benefits from this relationship. These strategies include supporting the 'One China' Policy and hiding negative stories on

the China-Zambia relationship in order to support China's strategy of blocking negative narratives on its development cooperation to African countries. China's economic relationship with Zambia has been strengthened to the point that is now another hegemonic force of power and influence in its development landscape. This has the potential to work against the SSC objectives of ensuring that developing countries have autonomy over their economies and are not dependent on a foreign entity. However, Zambia's ability to strategically improve its bargaining power in TDC is constrained more by its domestic politics and diverging interests amongst local stakeholders rather than by the geopolitics of development. For example, some politicians interfered in the selection of the companies to be awarded contracts in the RETT project, which resulted in legal issues, a budget shortfall and a change in the type of renewable energy technologies to be promoted (that is from biofuels to solar energy technologies).

These findings have several implications for development effectiveness in Zambia. This thesis has shown that public institutions tend to be the main stakeholders in TDC and, as a result, Zambia's ability to ensure that development outcomes stand the test of time, is severely challenged by the politicization and centralisation of development planning. At the institutional scale, one of the main reasons for this is that the top-down structure of project management generates high levels of ownership amongst steering committee members, but undermines feelings of ownership amongst other stakeholders (e.g. participants from line ministries, academic institutions and the private sector). In the case of the ToH project, this resulted in line ministry officials losing interest in the monitoring and evaluation of the 12 ToH Action Plans once the project had ended. Chapter Six also highlights that Zambian bureaucrats generally tend to have weakened feelings of ownership and less commitment to monitoring and reporting of donor-funded development interventions, largely as an institutionalised response to the dominance of Northern donors in the 1990s. This includes the donor approach of creating parallel work systems by anchoring development projects in the civil service or implementing them as standalone projects. This is further evidence that TDC does not occur in a vacuum, but is affected by the legacy of past partnerships.

The lack of internal reporting on project activities also has a serious bearing on the sustainability of development outcomes from TDC since there are insufficient measures in place to retain institutional memory when personnel retire or leave public institutions in Zambia. At present, most bureaucrats at the main institutions involved in the ToH project have little or no knowledge of the 12 ToH Action Plans and the outcomes of the project. The ToH Action Plans have now been shelved, even though significant time and country finances were spent developing them. This study also finds that the sustainability of development outcomes from TDC in Zambia is hindered by changes in the senior political leadership and bureaucratic structures. The president and cabinet ministers tend to interfere in development projects and policymaking which is a factor that has contributed to the reversal of development outcomes from the ToH project, particularly its economic policy reforms. Executive interference in civil service appointments has also led to high staff turnover and the loss of institutional memory gained on foreign investment promotion. The irony is that the Zambian government has recently asked Japan to provide it with technical assistance in the areas of foreign investment promotion in which the ToH project had previously managed to build local capacity.

Development outcomes from the RETT project are at risk of a similar fate. Consequently, it could be argued that knowledge is gained, then forgotten and Zambia is not able to achieve its overall goal of building (long-term) local capacity and attaining self-reliance. Sustainable development is a prominent narrative in policy spaces on effective development cooperation. However, the above examples of dysfunctional knowledge acquisition and retention also challenge claims that TDC can help attain the SDG agenda and address the global challenges associated with extreme poverty, conflict and environmental degradation in fragile and low-income developing countries. The research findings also present several lessons on the role of TDC in the changing geographies of power and development.

The changing geographies of global power and development

This research has shown that TDC is not only a modality aimed at supporting capacity development and technology transfer in the beneficiary country, but is also about strategic partnerships that can help both the beneficiary and its development cooperation providers to secure their institutional, national and global interests. At the institutional scale, development practitioners are committed to ensuring that development interventions in TDC are efficiently delivered in the beneficiary country. At the national/global scale, senior policymakers and politicians view TDC as a vehicle for controlling the movement of development knowledge, gaining soft power influence, accessing commercial opportunities and enhancing economic growth. This raises the question, then as to whether this a sign of the death of development or a sign that TDC has always been driven more by political motivations rather than development effectiveness. As discussed in Chapter Two, the origins of TDC lie in efforts to strengthen the use of Southern knowledge during the 1990s when Northern institutions, practices and policies dominated the global development architecture. This is in contrast to SSC, which has always been a political tool for developing countries to address the socio-economic inequalities that come out of the colonial era and to assert their sovereignty in global governance structures. However, TDC has also become a space for observing how the traditional Northern powers and emerging Southern powers are competing for influence over the global economy, governance structures and the sources of knowledge production.

As previously discussed, Zambia's interest in replicating East Asian models of industrial modernity in the ToH and RETT projects reflects the ongoing dewesternization of development thinking in the global South. The dewesternization of development cooperation, in particular, has raised concern amongst some Northern governments. Consequently, Northern countries such as Denmark are using TDC to convince beneficiary partners such as Zambia and Southern cooperation providers such as China, that Western political, economic, regulatory and epistemic values and standards are the best frameworks through which to deliver and receive development cooperation. However, TDC is also a space in which to observe how these countries

control or block narratives from forming in order to build and or retain their soft power influence. As discussed in Chapter Two, the OECD-led international development community established the aid effectiveness principles (succeeded by development effectiveness) in 2005, to guide how development cooperation should be delivered (OECD 2011). China, India and Brazil initially rejected these principles and started to create their own standards. These Southern cooperation providers were labelled as 'rogue predators' (Naim 2007), but it was later recognised that they could change these narratives and their global image by collaborating and learning from Northern cooperation providers through TDC. Denmark's proposal to collaborate with China in the RETT project also demonstrates how, within a decade, many Northern countries shifted from contesting Southern cooperation providers to embracing them. In this rapidly changing landscape, Japan has also distinguished itself from other development cooperation providers by strategically framing past bilateral development projects as TDC in its policy texts and framing itself as the all-weather friend that African countries can rely on to support horizontal and mutual learning. However, Japan's underlying objective is to position itself as the leading facilitator of TDC and to maintain its influence in the global development architecture.

TDC is also a space in which to observe the hybrid nature of development planning. In this space, beneficiary countries can learn and emulate the experiences of other countries without coercion from their development providers, as was the case with neoliberalism through the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). At the same time, TDC enables Southern countries such as China and Malaysia to ingest and digest elements of OECD best practice and thereby improve the effectiveness of their development cooperation. Chapter Four has shown that China has institutionalised some of the lessons learnt from Denmark in the RETT project and established a South-South centre for renewable energy technology transfer that is currently promoting its model in developing countries such as Ethiopia. More effective Chinese development cooperation will help it to mitigate narratives of the Chinese threat in the African development landscape, build its network of allies, increase its soft power influence to contest the dominance of Northern countries over global governance structures, and possibly build a new world order based on its economic development model. Thus,

China's move to cement its economic development model as a preferred alternative for developing countries does not accord with the efforts to reform knowledge production. As Mignolo (2018) notes, these efforts encompass diverse social actors (including activists, academics and journalists) who are working to ensure a pluriversal world in which different political, economic and epistemic traditions are respected and co-exist.

Despite this, China's influence in global development appears to be moving from strength to strength. China's Belt and Road Forum and the United Nations BAPA+40 conference are considered two of the most significant South-South/trilateral development cooperation events to have taken place in 2019 (UNOSSC 2019). Remarkably, 36 heads of state prioritised attending the Belt and Road Forum in April 2019, one-third of whom were from Europe, when compared to the 6 heads of state that were present at the United Nations BAPA+40 conference a month earlier (Steiner 2019; Tiezzi 2019). Of course, China's global power is not guaranteed to continue to rise. Abrupt changes in the domestic political and economic terrain threaten the stability of development programmes in countries that provide development cooperation, in the same way that they affect the beneficiary country. This can be seen from how the 9/11 terror attacks and the 2008–9 global financial crisis completely altered the scope and priorities of development cooperation programmes in most Northern countries. In addition, Brazil's rise as one of the most influential providers of SSC and as a pivotal partner in TDC has successively declined with every change in leadership from Lula da Silva to current President Jair Bolsonaro (Marcondes and Mawdsley 2017). The Bolsonaro administration has even indicated that it would like Brazil to join the OECD and its plans have received the support of the United States government (Verdelio 2020). It is unclear if this signals the demise of SSC as a mechanism that promotes 'the Bandung spirit of decolonization' and the emergence of a multipolar world order in which the North-South division is no longer distinguished by geography or a common set of principles (for example, the principles of SSC versus aid effectiveness). Nevertheless, these changes have the potential to make it more difficult for beneficiary countries to secure their national interests by playing Northern and Southern development partners against each other.

This does not automatically imply that beneficiary partners are simply vulnerable to the power that material wealth, political clout or development knowledge provides its development partners. This study has demonstrated that the beneficiary country can employ diverse and unexpected strategies to contest the influence of its development cooperation providers. It has also argued that the rise of the Southern cooperation providers has been key to strengthening Africa's bargaining position in these changing geographies of power. However, the limitations I encountered when researching the RETT project indicate that China's plans to use TDC to reform its image as a responsible global actor is also dependent on its African partners cooperating with its strategies, in this case blocking negative narratives on its economic and development cooperation activities. This suggests that scholarship on the decolonization of knowledge production needs to expand beyond the hegemonic nature of Western knowledge systems to the ways in which wealthy and influential Southern countries are suppressing knowledge that either falls outside their preferred frameworks or opposes their national interests. However, mutuality is an undisputable part of international relations. The legitimacy and power of all development cooperation providers is also dependent on their recognition and requests for support from Africa countries. This why Japan's development discourse places emphasis on its role as Africa's all-weather friend, and European countries have also recognised that their relations with Africa have to move beyond aid to trade, investments and capacity building. What remains to be seen is if African countries can ensure that South-South/trilateral development exchanges lead to effective development outcomes that stand the test of time, in spite of the complex politics of partnerships that constrains country ownership.

Policy Implications

Policy texts tend to concentrate on the technical aspects of TDC, such as project management and coordination amongst the different partners. However, this study has shown that TDC has a political dimension and there are unequal power relations

between the different partners that can constrain efforts to achieve beneficiary country ownership, inclusive partnerships and the sustainable development outcomes. These findings present a number of policy implications (discussed below) for development practitioners and multilateral forums that are working to improve the effectiveness of development cooperation.

Promoting national interests is a function of trilateral development cooperation.

TDC can act as a vehicle for partner countries to build their diplomatic relations or access commercial opportunities. At present, most beneficiary countries have not articulated official strategies to manage the potential opportunities and challenges that can be encountered in TDC due to the diverse interests at play. Evidence suggests that the Zambian government is engaging in TDC projects to access knowledge on the development experiences of Southern partners that can enable it to refine longstanding development plans, build its human/institutional capacity in specialist areas such as renewable energy, and attain self-sufficiency. In addition, the government only accepts TDC proposals that align with its national development priorities. However, an official strategy would help Zambia, or any other the beneficiary country using a similar approach, to improve its ability to secure its desired development objectives from future TDC projects. Development cooperation providers must also map out the beneficiary country's development priorities and preferred solutions in TDC projects, and ensure that their additional interests align rather than conflict with the beneficiary's plans.

There are many ways of understanding country ownership.

Evidence suggests that the beneficiary partner has more space to negotiate and leverage project activities towards national benefits in TDC than in some bilateral partnerships. However, some institutional actors in the beneficiary country do not take up opportunities to lead the planning or implementation of project activities. Instead, they relegate their understanding of exercising 'country ownership' to securing desired

development outcomes from a TDC project, such as technical skills, technologies or infrastructure. This is an institutionalised response to Zambia's history of being dominated by its Northern donors during a period of aid dependency in the late 1980s and 1990s, and the enduring assumption that donors will dominate development projects even though a commitment to country ownership is expressed in project plans. Therefore, measures aimed at supporting country ownership in TDC must take into consideration the historical context of a beneficiary country's relationship with both its Northern and Southern development cooperation providers.

Non-implementation of recommendations is not always a sign of capacity weaknesses, but an indirect strategy the beneficiary country employs to preserve sovereignty.

Another institutionalised response to Zambia's history of donor domination is that bureaucrats tend to use unenthusiastic participation in project activities or non-implementation of recommendations to block and/or control the introduction of externally-driven development interventions, instead of directly expressing their disagreement. This strategy is also employed to contest and negotiate the South-South transfer of policy experiences in TDC projects. In other instances, beneficiary partners use hybridization of South-South policy experiences and development knowledge. This involves the careful selection, modification and implementation of some elements of a donors recommendations to suit local needs or contexts, and the disregard of other elements. However, development cooperation providers also have different cultures and approaches to work. This can lead to disagreements and opposing views on how issues such as capacity development should be delivered in TDC projects. Consequently, investing time in establishing trust, communication and a common understanding of the project goals, can help to mitigate potential conflicts stemming from cultural differences between the different partners and improve the development effectiveness of TDC.

There are limits to which inclusive national ownership can be achieved in countries where development planning is politicised and decision-making power is highly centralised.

Public institutions tend to be the main implementing partners in beneficiary countries. However, there are limits to which inclusive national ownership of TDC can result in sustainable development outcomes in a developing country such as Zambia, where development planning is politicised and decision-making power is highly centralised. Interference from senior policymakers and politicians in negotiations for TDC projects can result in cheaper and more suitable development interventions being side-lined during project implementation. Changes to national policy, when there is a change in senior leadership, can result in the reversal of TDC outcomes related to policy reforms. Significantly, political interference in civil service appointments can also result in high staff turnover and the loss of knowledge gained through TDC. These are challenges that have contributed significantly to the reversal of policy reforms and the loss of knowledge on foreign direct investment promotion that Zambia gained during the ToH project. This indicates that civil service institutions need to develop strategic plans on how to mitigate executive interference so as to ensure that there is continuity of planned project activities and that development outcomes from TDC are sustained.

Measures to retain institutional memory should be prioritised in TDC.

Remarkably for projects aimed at building beneficiary country capacity, the loss of institutional memory appears to pose the greatest threat to the sustainability of development outcomes from TDC. This is mainly a result of the fact that poor internal communication and reporting mechanisms (such as the publication of project reports) within government institutions result in the loss of institutional memory on projects when there is staff turnover. This also weakens the sustainability of project outcomes because officials who replace them have little or no knowledge of the programmes, including its goals and links with long-term development plans. Loss of institutional memory is also a problem in donor agencies and further weakens the overall

management of TDC projects. These challenges with institutional memory appear to have led to observations in studies, such as those by Lengfelder (2016) and the UN (2019), that there is only a limited amount of information on TDC collected and made available by participating institutions. Therefore, all partners should prioritise the evaluation and reporting of TDC projects in order to preserve institutional memory and improve information sharing with relevant stakeholders and the general public. In addition, beneficiary partners should ensure that project activities are integrated into the day-to-day activities of participating institutions, and/or linkages are established between a TDC project and other development interventions. For example, linkages have been established between the RETT solar centre of excellence and development projects in the health and renewable energy sectors managed by UNDP and the Ministry of Energy in Zambia.

Avenues for further research

This research has contributed to filling knowledge gaps in the study of TDC and has highlighted several conceptual and methodological avenues that merit further exploration. Firstly, it has demonstrated the significance of concepts that originated in postcolonial theory in enabling a deeper understanding of the machinations of power within TDC, its relationship to the production and dissemination of knowledge, and the importance of examining beneficiary agency in development partnerships. Most significant are the theories concerning how power is a form of knowledge that enables actors that are perceived to possess development knowledge significant authority to define and influence the trajectory of those actors that are in the position of receiving their knowledge (see McEwan 2019). Debates have traditionally focused on the power that Northern countries have had to influence development thinking and planning in developing countries. However, this thesis has shown that China is just as, if not now more significant, in influencing the Zambian government's approach to managing the economy and its foreign policy through its development cooperation.

Zambian bureaucrats, including participants in the RETT project, are self-censoring or hiding the negative aspects of China-Zambia relations to safeguard the continued flow of development cooperation, trade and investments from China. Zambian bureaucrats involved in the ToH project also avoided opportunities to seek foreign direct investment from Taiwan in order to uphold China's one country policy. Therefore, future postcolonial studies on development cooperation might help to expand scholarship on the relationship between power and knowledge in development by exploring the ways in which Southern hegemonies are constraining or influencing the space for beneficiary countries to control their policymaking and development processes. However, the concept of anthropophagy (cannibalism) has also enabled this thesis to cast light on how the beneficiary country is not simply passive in response to the considerable economic power and influence its development partners possess in TDC. It has demonstrated that the beneficiary country uses appropriation and hybridization to negotiate the transfer of policy experiences and to maintain some control of the local development landscape.

In his discussion of how hybridity emerged in the colonial context, Homi Bhabha (2004) documented the ways in which the colonial encounter also led the coloniser to embrace some of the cultural practices of those they colonised. This calls attention to how policy diffusion is not only moving in the South-South direction in the changing geographies of power but rather, as discussed in Chapter Five, Northern countries have also begun to absorb elements of SSC. They have adopted practices such as the blending of development finances with trade and investment agendas, as part of a transformation that Emma Mawdsley (2018) refers to as the 'Southernisation' of international development cooperation. Therefore, fresh insight into the exercise of beneficiary agency and debates on the relationship between power and knowledge in development cooperation can be obtained through further research into the role of anthropophagy or hybridization in South-South/trilateral development exchanges.

The Zambian case has also demonstrated that postcolonial critiques of the presence of a knower-learner dichotomy in development cooperation are far more complex when examined at the scale of the state or policy elites. The Zambian government has

historically used technical cooperation to ‘learn’ from others and address the country’s skilled labour shortage and its reliance on foreign technical expertise in the civil service and industrial sector, which are the legacy of colonial governance. The views expressed by stakeholders in ToH and RETT projects indicate that Zambia is also using TDC to learn from the policy experiences of other developing countries and to address persistent capacity gaps in specialist areas. Further reflection on this beneficiary country perspective on learning can enrich debates on the politics of knowledge production and the nature of partnerships in TDC.

The second area in which this research has contributed to filling knowledge gaps concerns methodology. Employing an institutional ethnography (IE) has enabled it to demonstrate that one of the main reasons there are only a few empirically-based TDC studies is because it is difficult for researchers to extract information from the main development institutions and bureaucracies involved in the implementation of TDC projects. Key stakeholders tend to prefer narratives of TDC that focus on: the technical aspects of project implementation and coordination, how it assists beneficiary countries to achieve priorities in their national development plans, and how it builds the project management capacity of Southern cooperation providers. Key stakeholders tend to find narratives that suggest underlying interests in development cooperation as undermining their professionalism and as a threat to potential opportunities to replicate development practice. However, this thesis has unsettled this narrative and revealed that there are geopolitical and geoeconomic interests driving TDC.

IE specifically enabled this research to capture and centre the beneficiary country’s ways of knowing and understanding into the collection and analysis of data of how the politics of partnership affects country ownership. The research was also able to contribute additional insights into beneficiary agency by demonstrating that Zambian stakeholders do not agree with the institutionalised approach and vocabularies Northern academic and policy circles employ in researching South-South relations. However, they engage in these discourses when operating in donor-driven policy spaces in order to secure development cooperation. These findings make a strong case for future studies committed to decolonizing knowledge production to engage with

institutional ethnography instead of the current dependence on survey-based research methods in order to open up to new perspectives on South-South/trilateral cooperation.

The difficulty I experienced in securing an interview from RETT project stakeholders from China cast light particularly on how Chinese institutions are reluctant to participate in interviews with Northern-based researchers. This appears to be a response to the negative coverage of China-Africa relations in past news media and academic publications. The reluctance of Chinese informants, alongside the discomfort exhibited by Zambian informants when I asked questions concerning aspects of their partnership with China, led me to reflect on the expectations and affective responses (anxiety, suspicion and frustration) of over-researched groups. Most methodological studies tend to focus on the ethical considerations involved in dealing with research-fatigued groups positioned at the lower levels of social stratification, especially vulnerable groups such as women and indigenous peoples. However, there is need for further reflection in methodological studies on how researchers can manage the ethics of engaging with policy elites who are similarly affected by research fatigue, and specifically the implications of research fatigue on the study of China-Africa relations.

This research has also cast light on the ‘tyranny’ involved in researchers extracting information and not empowering their informants when ‘studying up.’ Given that TDC is a relatively new modality of which very little is known, some informants asked me to produce a brief report containing policy findings so that they could better understand TDC. I intend to write this report and distribute it to key informants from the Zambian government, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A failure to respect this request could potentially be seen as a form of exploitation since Zambia struggles with bureaucratic challenges around monitoring, evaluation and reporting on development cooperation. Therefore, it is imperative that future qualitative studies of South-South/trilateral development cooperation not only show a commitment to recovering the beneficiary perspective, but that they will also reflect on and prioritise reciprocity (in the form of information sharing) with policy elites

from developing countries. As this research has demonstrated, these policy elites are 'subaltern' in international development and are likely to remain so as long as their countries have difficulties in researching, publishing and sharing knowledge on their development experiences.

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Appendix 1: Primary Sources

I. Interviewees

Fieldwork site: Lusaka, Zambia

Name	Date	Duration (h= hour, m= minutes)	Institution affiliated	Role
A	7 September 2017	1h 00m	UNDP Zambia	RETT Project Focal Person
B	22 September 2017	0h 45m	UNDP Zambia & Ministry of Energy	RETT Project Manager
C and D	25 September 2017	0h 30m	University of Zambia	Members- RETT solar energy centre of excellence PMU
E	17 January 2018	1h 30m	Private Consultant (previously with Zambia Development Agency)	ToH Project Coordinator
F	18 January 2018	1h 00m	Private Consultant	Renewable energy Specialist
G	30 January 2018	1h 00m	University of Zambia	Project Manager- RETT solar energy centre of excellence
H	5 February 2018	1h 00m	Japan International Cooperation Agency	Programme Officer
I	13 February 2018	0h 45m	Private Consultant (previously with Ministry of Health)	Member- ToH Health taskforce

J	27 February 2018	0h 15m	Ministry of Energy	Member- RETT project PMU
K	28 February 2018	1h 30m	Ministry of Finance	Member- ToH Banking and Finance taskforce
L	7 September 2018	0h 30m (Skype)	UNDP China - Beijing	RETT Programme Manager
M	23 October 2018	1h 00m (Skype)	UN Office for South- South Cooperation - New York	Policy Analyst
N	9 December 2018	Email	Royal Danish Embassy- Beijing	Political Officer/Danida Advisor

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Appendix 2: Sample Interview Templates

A. Interview with members of RETT solar energy centre excellence PMU, 25 September 2017

1. What has been your role in the project? At what point in the project lifecycle did you get involved?
2. Is this the first project this department has worked on with Denmark, UNDP or the Ministry of Energy?
3. In a partnership, all sides should mutually benefit from a project. In your opinion, why did these partners support the project?
4. What advice would you give to another research institution that wants to participate in a similar project? How have you ensured that your voice is heard in this project when there are many partners?
5. Did you have input into the kind of training that you wanted during exchange trips in China?
6. How did you handle cultural and linguistic differences with Chinese partners?
7. What does country ownership mean to you in this project?
8. How does your team intend to ensure that the solar energy centre is sustainable?
9. Are there any plans to write and/or disseminate a report on the development of the solar energy centre and your participation in the project?

B. Interview request sent to RETT Project Manager at ACCA21, 23 August 2018

1. What has been your role in the project? Were you involved in the planning stage?
2. Why did China choose to support this project?

3. How did Chinese partners ensure that training provided to Zambian officials matches local needs and context?
4. Are there any plans to support UNZA and Kafue Gorge Regional Training Centre to maintain the solar centre and small hydro demonstration plant after project completion?
5. What are the main lessons you have learnt on managing South-South/trilateral cooperation partnerships with African countries? What advice would you give to other donor organisations that want to participate in a similar project?

C. Interview with the ToH Project Coordinator, 17 January 2018

1. How did the ToH project begin? Who initiated it?
2. What was your role in the project?
3. How were roles and responsibilities divided in the project?
4. How was the project able to generate strong support and interest from senior government officials?
5. Did you observe a difference in participation between senior government officials and line ministry officials?
6. Do you think the outcomes of the project have been sustained?
7. Has staff turnover affected the implementation/maintenance of project outcomes in any way?
8. Did a change in government leadership in 2008 and 2011, have any impact on the implementation of project activities?
9. In a partnership, all sides should mutually benefit from a project. In your opinion, why did Malaysia and Japan choose to support the ToH project?
10. Were the recommendations from the Malaysian context suitable for Zambia?
11. What are the main lessons you have learnt from the ToH project? What advice would you give to government institutions and/or cooperating partners that want to embark on a similar trilateral partnership model?

D. Interview with JICA Programme Officer, 5 February 2018

1. How did the ToH project begin? Who initiated it?
2. Did you participate in the project and if yes, what was your role?
3. Does JICA consider the project a success?
4. In your opinion, why did the project attract strong support and interest from senior government officials in Zambia?
5. Did JICA find a difference in participation between senior government officials and line ministry officials?
6. Did a change in government leadership in 2008 and 2011, have any impact on the implementation of project activities?
7. In a partnership, all sides should benefit from a project. In your opinion, why did Japan and Malaysia choose to support the ToH project?
8. What are the main lessons you have learnt from evaluating the ToH project? What advice would you give to government institutions and/or cooperating partners that want to embark on a similar trilateral partnership model?