LOST IN TRANSLATION: ABC COOPERATION AND RECONSTRUCTION IN HAITI

Andreas E. Feldmann, Miguel Lengyel, Bernabè Malacalza and Antonio Ramalho.¹


Abstract

This article investigates cooperation efforts on the part of Argentina, Brazil and Chile (the ABC countries) in Haiti. It addresses two salient puzzles. First, why did ABC countries miss the opportunity to build a stronger strategic approach in Haiti, despite the favourable setting presented by a multinational stabilisation and development initiative? Second, why has their cooperation in Haiti not surmounted typical characteristics of North-South cooperation such as poor coordination? It is argued that the absence of strategic cooperation between ABC countries and the reproduction of problems plaguing North-South cooperation, derive from a complex mix of factors including philosophically different models of economic development, historical rivalries, as well as the interaction between ABC countries and Haitian political actors.

Introduction

Latin American states became important players in the overall effort to stabilize Haiti after the acute political crisis that resulted in the ousting of President Jean Betrand Aristide in 2004. In order to prevent a looming humanitarian calamity, in June of that year the UN Security Council dispatched the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). MINUSTAH’s mandate included assisting and protecting civilians; disarming armed parties, pacifying the country; helping the Transitional Government by strengthen and reforming institutions (e.g., the police, judiciary, prison system) and buttressing the rule of law; endorsing the political process and organizing, and monitoring free elections; and promoting human rights (MINUSTAH 2011). This mission, arguably a very challenging one for the UN, was almost entirely handed over to Latin American states, in particular Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay.²

The leadership taken by Argentina, Brazil and Chile (the ABC countries) in the stabilisation effort in Haiti constitutes an emblematic example of post Cold War initiatives aimed at promoting global peace and security undertaken under the aegis of the United Nations. It also reflects a genuine commitment towards strengthening economic integration, democratic rule, and security in the Americas. ABC countries realized how the exposure of their military and civilian personnel to a collective security endeavour allowed them to play a novel role in international affairs by making visible and articulating new South-South cooperation strategies. These

¹ Authors appear in alphabetical order. We acknowledge research assistance by Alexander Micic.
² Latin American countries contribute with 60% of UN troops deployed in Haiti. Countries contributing military personnel (7,039 in all) include: Argentina (558 including a field hospital), Bolivia (208), Brazil (2,200), Canada (10), Chile (499), Croatia (3), Ecuador (67), France (2), Guatemala (118), Jordan (728), Nepal (1,075), Paraguay (31), Peru (209), the Philippines (157), Sri Lanka (959), United States (4), and Uruguay (1,135) (United Nations 2011).
strategies were also aimed at increasing their maneuvering room in the region, undertaking initiatives of their own vintage premised on the link between security and development, and reaffirming their commitment with the principles of democracy, multilateralism and poverty reduction. Participation in MINUSTAH could become a building block in their purpose of forging a united front in a region where assertive Venezuelan diplomacy and US influence polarized views on matters such as regional security, democracy and trade. It was also a test case for future cooperation initiatives (Tripodi and Villar 2005; Heine and Thompson 2011).

The suitable context notwithstanding, ABC countries did not seize the opportunity to use joint initiatives in Haiti as a means to strengthen their cooperation in areas including security and cooperation. **Seven years after joining MINUSTAH, Argentina, Brazil and Chile have been unable to substantively articulate their international development cooperation programs in Haiti.** Why did the ABC countries miss the opportunity Haiti presented them to build closer ties and a stronger strategic stance in the areas of security and cooperation? We posit that four main factors account for this failure. First, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile embrace philosophically different models of economic development and therefore view development aid in different lights. Not surprisingly, their initiatives diverged both in terms of approach and specific policy content. Second, an underlying, competitive spirit among these countries informed by historical rivalries has worked against enhancing and deepening cooperation, even in the face of common challenges. Third, ABC countries have different sets of interests on the ground. The fourth reason is previewed by Baranyi in the introductory article of this special issue. **The inability to create stronger cooperation reflects different levels of commitment towards peace-building initiatives on the one hand, and the inherent problems of implementing the Paris Declaration on Aid effectiveness, on the other.**

This paper results from a cooperative research effort focused on examining the political processes that preside the formulation and implementation of the ABC countries efforts towards Haiti. It has benefited from several seminars in which authors tested the findings of their respective research. This joint effort is partly the result of a project investigating emerging South-South cooperation sponsored by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Here we summarize our common understanding about the scope, purposes, and achievements of these countries’ policies with respect to MINUSTAH. Following Levy (2008), we present this work as a hypothesis-generating comparative case study. Through an examination of cooperation efforts in Haiti, we seek to improve our understanding of the stumbling blocks undermining general efforts to deepen cooperation by selected Latin American countries. This material can later be tested through other methods and studies, (e.g. large N studies) to buttress and refine our understanding of the conditions, both domestically and internationally, favoring regional cooperation in peacebuilding and reconstruction.

This article proceeds as follows. The first section elaborates on the antecedents of ABC cooperation. It also examines the goals and incentives informing these countries’ involvement in Haiti against the backdrop of South-South development cooperation models. The second section describes and examines the philosophies informing these countries’ cooperation programs and their concomitant approaches towards Haitian partners. The concluding section discusses some lessons that could be drawn from this
experience as a way to contribute to evolving debates concerning South-South development cooperation in a particular regional context.

The antecedents of ABC cooperation

The antecedents of an ABC Pact go back to 1915, when Brazil endorsed talks to curb an incipient arms race in the region. Years later, in the 1940s, Presidents Juan Domingo Perón of Argentina, Getulio Vargas of Brazil, and Chilean President Carlos Ibañez del Campo sought to promote closer ties among their states underscoring common challenges and threats. In both opportunities embryonic movements seeking closer cooperation among the ABC countries succumbed against the backdrop of mutual distrust and rivalry over pre-eminence (Dalponte and Marinkeff 2009; Hirst 2010).

Prospects for furthering coordination on foreign policy among the ABC countries prospered within the context of the third wave of democratization that swept the region in the late 1980s (Dalponte and Marinkeff 2009, Hirst 2010, Feldmann and Montes 2010). This trend deepened as ABC countries mounted a common security stance to counterbalance the aggressive agenda advanced by the United States following the September 11, 2001 attacks (Lengyel, Malacalza and Thury 2010; Diamint 2007). These efforts were the result of work of an epistemic community comprised of civilian personnel and military officers working in the defence ministries who realized that cooperation was pivotal to further their position in several areas deemed critical such as Haiti. The creation of the so-called 2x9 Meetings, where Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs of nine Latin American countries with troops in Haiti (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay) regularly met to discuss relevant security and development cooperation matters was also pivotal to buttress the ABC´s stance. The joint collaboration of Defence and Foreign Affairs ministries is an excellent antecedent to regional consensus-building (Diamint 2007:5) and may have contributed to enhance regional capacity to commit troops to peacekeeping operations (Llenderrozas 2007). Unfortunately, these meetings have not been institutionalized and remain ad hoc initiatives (Ruz 2010). Coordination among ABC in dealing with G-8 donor countries also helped to strengthen common positions.

MINUSTAH and ABC countries’ goals

Brazil acquiesced to take a leading position within MINUSTAH as a political platform to enhance its status as a regional power with global ambitions. Other reasons inform the Brazilian decision to accept a prominent role in the efforts to rebuild Haiti: (a) the conviction of governments and the political establishment that a regional solution would be more effective to tackle Haiti’s predicament; (b) the opposition of the US authorities to a possible Chilean leadership, a retaliatory measure for Chile’s reluctance to endorse a US sponsored Security Council resolution to military intervene in Iraq; (c) the desire to abide by her own discourse concerning its readiness to take responsibilities at the international realm; (d) the formal request on the part of France, the US and Canada, which were over-stretched due to their troop commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq and thus felt unable to lead an operation; (e) the formal request on the part of Haitian authorities; and (f) MINUSTAH matched perfectly well Brazil’s commitment towards
South-South cooperation, one of its foreign policy priorities, and contributed to bolster the country’s prestige.

As indicated by Brazil’s former Foreign Relations Minister:

*Brazil was right about sending troops and assuming the military command of MINUSTAH because, in the first place, it was a mission decided by the UNSC, the only organ with the legitimacy to determine the presence of foreign troops in a sovereign country* (Amorim 2009).

For Chile, Haiti was a golden opportunity to make a gesture of political and strategic rapprochement with the United States following the Iraq *impasse*. This would be the first participation of the Chilean Armed Forces in large-scale UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO). Several factors inform Chile’s commitment to participating in MINUSTAH: (a) a relevant participation of Chile in Haiti seemed an excellent opportunity to show the international stature of President Lagos’ leadership; and (b) Chile’s economy showed signs of strong recovery after the meagre results of the late 90s and early 00s. It was not a question of simply having the resources, but also of underscoring its conviction that international solidarity is an ethical and political imperative that should materialize in concrete terms in regional initiatives.

This vision was restated rather candidly by Chile’s former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alejandro Foxley:

*Chile had the intention to help Haiti not only for humanitarian reasons, but in order to increase its international prestige as well. Prestige yields good dividends by boosting leadership, something that may translate into more investment which is beneficial to the country* (cited in Feldmann and Montes 2010).

The quick commitment of Brazil and especially Chile elicited suspicion in the Argentine government about those countries’ aspirations of enlarging their regional influence. Soon after the articulation of the MIFH under the American aegis, the US decided not to fully take in their hands actions in Haiti, paving thus the way for a rapid channelling of initiatives through the UN. This favoured Argentina’s long-standing preference for multilateral endeavours to handle crisis situations. In addition, the American “retreat” and the shift to multilateralism fed the perception of Argentina’s foreign policy circles that a window of opportunity was emerging for Latin American countries to play a bolder role in crisis episodes within the region (Lengyel 2006).³

**The multidimensional involvement of the ABC countries in Haiti**

MINUSTAH represents an example of the so-called third generation peacekeeping operations, characterized by challenging goals and a complex mandates. These operations may be deployed without the consent of warring parties and seek to provide assistance and protection to civilians, force hostile groups to abandon violence, and collaborate on state creation and-or reconstruction (Talentino 2006; Doyle and

³ Two key domestic factors also informed Argentina’s decision to participate in MINUSTAH: (a) it would secure US support in international institutions, especially financial (e.g., International Monetary Fund and World Bank) at the time when the country was in the middle of the harsh post-default debt negotiations with international financial agencies and private bond-holders; and (b) it was highly functional to the government’s goal of identifying a new role and mission for Argentina’s Armed Forces and improving civil-military relations at a moment in which the Kirchner administration was making a strong drive to further democratize such forces.
Sambanis 2006, 10-12; Baranyi 2008). In the case of MINUSTAH, its specific goals included: (i) creating a secure and stable environment; (ii) guaranteeing respect for human rights; and (iii) supporting the political process in Haiti. Against the backdrop of widespread violence and a dysfunctional, weak state incapable of providing basic public goods, the UN mission was mandated to help Haiti bring about political stability and boost its economy. This included creating a safe and secure environment and curbing scores of non-state armed groups, helping civilians afflicted by war, disease, and displacement; promoting political dialogue with the aim of organizing democratic elections, developing infrastructure and buttressing the rule of law (Marcon des Souza 2009; Shamsie and Thompson 2006).

The challenging goals set up by MINUSTAH represented a major opportunity for ABC countries. In addition to accumulating experience in major diplomatic fora, ABC participation in MINUSTAH became a valuable opportunity to assess their approach to overseas assistance. ABC countries have openly expressed their commitment towards promoting the so-called South-South cooperation as a major element informing their foreign policies. Haiti, therefore, was seen by ABC countries as a valuable opportunity to assess their practices in the realm of bilateral cooperation (Lengyel 2006).

**ABC Cooperation Programs: strengths and weaknesses**

ABC countries complemented their multilateral efforts with several bilateral initiatives. Brazil has invested over US$ 2,750 million in its technical cooperation with Haiti in 2010, 46% more than in 2009. Between 2005 and 2010, these initiatives consumed roughly US$ 7 billion mainly in the areas of assistance to development and public health. In 2010, 17 projects covered 7 areas: Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (8); Health (3); Justice & Security (2); and Infrastructure, Professional Qualification, Culture and Sports, each with one project. Brazil’s experience in Angola has shown the importance of linking reconstruction efforts to long-term development goals, particularly in the field of infrastructure (Farani 2011).

Because of Haiti, Brazil better articulated its efforts on the ground. Alone, Haiti accounted for over 13% of Brazilian expenses with technical cooperation between 2005 and 2010, the fourth highest budget, behind Mozambique (15.78%), East Timor (15.16%), and Guinea Bissau (14.43%). But the perspectives for Haiti include huge infrastructure projects, such as the hydroelectric dam project called “Artibonite 4 C” in the Plateau Central, estimated in US$ 190 million. In addition, Brazil contributed US$ 220 million to humanitarian assistance after the Haitian earthquake (Farani, 2011).

Argentina’s cooperation initiatives present smaller figures and broader scope. They include initiatives in areas such as education, institutional building, security, health infrastructure, food security and housing. **Argentina’s flagship program is the Argentinean Program for Fresh Food Self-sufficiency. Known as ProHuerta, this program aims at fostering the capacity of small farmers and communities to produce organic vegetables through the provision of technical assistance.** It involves the participation of the Haitian Ministry of Agriculture and has been implemented in schools, orphanages, training centers, farmer associations,

---

4Violent groups include paramilitary groups with links to Haiti’s economic elite and with ties to the dissolved army; renegade members of the armed forces and police; armed gangs and criminal syndicates smuggling drugs, arms and other illegal merchandise; common criminals (ICG 2009).
women’s’ associations, professional centers, parishes and congregations of various religious denominations (IICA 2008).

**Chile, for its part, has undertaken programs in areas including education, child support, environment, technology, public security and health.** The training of the newly formed Haitian National Police has been an important component of Chile’s contribution to MINUSTAH. Two other important projects include the Chilean Program for Food Security, which benefits approximately 1,000 Haitians; and the Education Project for Kindergartens (Piraces 2008).

In short, as Chart 1 illustrates, beyond their specific roles in MINUSTAH, ABC countries’ bilateral cooperation schemes do not reflect a concerted, well-planned strategy with coordinated medium or long-term goals. Their bilateral contributions in the fields of Food Security and Education, just to mention but two relevant areas, have not produced an integrated, trilateral rural development initiative. Rather than providing the tools for fostering state building, community self-sufficiency, articulating private and public initiatives and, more broadly, sustainable development, ABC countries’ cooperation programs lack a clear focus, are neither fully consistent nor particularly resourceful, and appear to generate- with some exceptions- limited spill-overs. The disparity of resources allocated to and results obtained by MINUSTAH in comparison to bilateral schemes, moreover, points out that ABC countries’ contribution is stronger in the realm of peacekeeping as opposed to peace-building. Indeed, these countries have been able to help maintain public order and provide immediate relief in terms of social needs, addressing short-term expectations. However, the connection between these initial efforts and an articulated long-term development strategy are far from clear. As a result, their purported goal of helping to address and remedy on a permanent basis the predicament of the Haitian population seems not achieved.

Even though they share a technical assistance approach based on knowledge and officials exchanges, lack of institutional capacities to support coherent, long-term programs, the presence of inter-Ministry disputes (e.g., the dispute between the Foreign Ministry and the Social Development Ministry in Argentina regarding the coordination Pro Huerta initiatives) and the frequent changes in officials responsible for cooperation (with three months rotations), among others, are some of the obstacles that impede a joint ownership of the ABC programs in line with the Paris Declaration.

ABC countries’ political engagement concerning MINUSTAH involved the creation of a coordination mechanism, the so-called 2x9 mechanism, with the aim of institutionalizing the discussion of common policies and other concerns. Some authors argue that the 2x9 mechanism has contributed to enhance coordination among ABC countries by stressing that the joint collaboration of Defence and Foreign Affairs ministries is an excellent antecedent to regional consensus-building (Diamint 2007:5). Other authors, in turn, recognize that the joint participation in such activities has enhanced regional capacity to commit troops to peacekeeping operations (Llenderrozas 2007). To sum up, the evolution of their respective bilateral initiatives indicates that the ABC countries seem not to have been able to fully take advantage of the 2x9 mechanism, whose consultation meetings have thus far been characterized by informality, intermittence, lack of predictability and ineffectiveness. After the dreadful 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the newly created Union of South American Nations
(UNASUR) has also become involved in Haiti further blurring the role of ABC countries in the Haitian emergency (Heine and Thompson 2011).

Chart I. ABC Development Cooperation Programs in Haiti by area of cooperation (2005-2011)
The literature on humanitarian assistance and development aid establishes that inefficiencies and duplication are common features when it comes to executing initiatives on the ground (Weiss and Barnett 2008, Kent 1987). This brief overview of the ABC countries’ initiatives in Haiti offers yet another example of this pattern. Despite their efforts within the 2x9 mechanism and UNASUR, ABC countries have not even been able to coordinate their action at the political and diplomatic levels, much less on the ground in Haiti. Whether UNASUR will contribute to strengthen the coordination of ABC countries’ initiatives on the ground remains an open question.

Obstacles to cooperative efforts

ABC countries have explicitly regarded their respective participation in MINUSTAH as a crucial element of their foreign policies because it galvanizes their power regionally, enhances their international prestige, and provides opportunities to calibrate cooperation efforts abroad. This joint mission opens up opportunities for them to strengthen foreign policy coordination in light of relevant developments in the Americas. In spite of these factors and their purported commitment to building common ground, cooperation has remained very shallow. This is particularly perplexing because the challenging and at times hostile environment in Haiti represents an ideal context to deepen cooperation. The gap between concrete cooperation on the ground and their diplomatic discourses, however, evidences the limits of ABC countries’ joint efforts.

Different models of development and their impact on foreign policy orientations

The link between development and foreign policy orientations is not straightforward. Causality is not unidirectional: sometimes, domestic development considerations strongly permeate perspectives on international affairs, influencing national options for alliance-building, decisions in international fora, involvement in international conflicts. Moreover, commitments made at the international level shape the boundaries or timeframe of domestic development policies. In countries whose states present important functional and ideological cleavages, the preferences of bureaucratic agencies working in the field of development are not always paid due attention by public officials in the foreign affairs departments (Haynes 2010: 86-110).

These caveats notwithstanding, the consolidation of alternative economic development models have hampered cooperation among ABC countries in Haiti. Motivated by domestic factors, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile have embraced different domestic economic development paths. As discussed below, these paths have also influenced their views on international assistance, and more specifically their strategies in Haiti.

Brazil under Lula’s government

After World War II, Brazil developed through an import substitution industrialization (ISI) model predicated on the idea that the state should play a central role in the economy. The state regulated economic activities, taxed imports and provided subsidies and investment in a range of industrial sectors deemed strategic for the development of productive autonomy. The emphasis relied on a flexible foreign policy seeking greater projection of the country internationally (Hirst and Soares de Lima 2006:23)
As Brazil gradually liberalized its economy since the 1980s, its foreign policy also shifted towards accommodation with the neo-liberal norms. Under President Lula’s government (2002-2010), Brazil resumed its autonomy-focused strategy with strong global aspirations. It revived some of its traditional objectives: (a) the construction of an international order based on rules and institutions, rather than on power politics; (b) the talent to serve as a consensus-builder, fixing the country’s image of a peaceful and constructive member of the international society; and (c) the attempt to avoid confrontation with other countries, leaving all doors opened (Valler 2007; Sweig 2010). Nonetheless, it also innovated. For example, it denounced the unfairness inherent in the international order and offered technical cooperation to less developed countries all over the world, a move that informed Brazil’s decision to engage in MINUSTAH. After all, Haiti symbolizes better than any other country the huge inequalities observed in the Western Hemisphere. Because Brazil had previously announced its preparedness to assume greater responsibilities on the international stage, but failed to materialize this promise in different occasions, it was difficult to avoid engaging in Haiti.

By defending a more just international order ruled by more representative global institutions, Brazil affirms an economic and political standpoint which conceives insecurity and underdevelopment as inextricably linked to injustice and unrest, both at the domestic and international level (Hirst 2006; Valler 2007; Soares de Lima 2005; Hurrel 2007). The Brazilian position expresses itself in a number of concerted actions it has carried out with other emerging countries. These include India-Brazil-South Africa (2003) and BRICs (2009) forums; the Commercial G-20 (back in 2003); the Financial G-20 (2009); and several regional and global Summits. Brazil called for a global fund against poverty (2004) adopted ambitions positions regarding environmental conservation at Copenhagen-13 with the creation of the Bali Roadmap (2007), and at the Copenhagen-15 (2009). These initiatives reflect Brazil and other BRICs’ views that global institutions are unrepresentative of some key political players. They also reflect the hope global governance reform, particularly within UN, will open room for repositioning Brazil in a new world order.

A number of initiatives in areas including transportation, power generation and distribution, and the promotion of regional integration in South America complement the efforts to improve the country’s position at the world stage by reducing inequalities and promoting socioeconomic development. In this context, MINUSTAH represents for Brazil an opportunity to develop joint projects that may promote regional integration and enhance its prestige. Assuming a leading role in shaping a prosperous and stable region capable of addressing its own problems is thus a priority (Soares de Lima 2005; Valler 2007).

Brazil has adhered to the Paris Declaration and formally stressed its intention to strengthen the local ownership of development projects, with a particular focus on rural development. It also avoids imposing conditionalities and relating its projects to Brazilian investments or trade. The Brazilian government pragmatically operates its foreign policy, but it also points to a “horizon of idealism”: it wants to project abroad the commitment shown domestically with promoting social justice, reducing poverty,

---

Brazil’s South-South cooperation since 2002 shows impressive results: It opened 35 embassies particularly in Asia and Africa, 30 of which have been reciprocated; between 2003 and 2008, Brazil’s foreign trade with particular regions has grown, respectively, 249% with South-American countries, 316% with Africa, 329% with ASEAN countries and 370% with Arab countries. This contrasts with the bilateral trade with traditional partners, such as the United States, which roughly doubled, from US$ 26.2 Billion to US$ 53.05 Billion in the same period (Itamaraty 2010).

---
improving democracy, strengthening sustainable development, and respecting human rights (Patriota 2011). However, the cooperation offered by the Brazilian government, in Haiti and elsewhere, is clearly demand-driven and focused on the sectors where governmental organs have developed the capacity to offer short-term results: agriculture and health. It also involves the private sector in promoting professional formation for the industrial sector.

Chile under “The Concertación” governments

Chilean involvement in Haiti represents part of a major diplomatic offensive to reinsert the country in international circles. Following years of international isolation stemming from the repudiation that the military dictatorship (1973-1989) created internationally, the coalition that would govern the country for the next 20 years (1990-2010)7 wholeheartedly promoted an active participation in international affairs. This policy has continued under the administration of President Sebastian Piñera (2011-). Chile’s thesis is that globalization generates risks, poses questions, but also opens up great opportunities that may bring benefits to the country (Feldmann and Montes 2010).

Against this backdrop, Chile has adopted a pro-active role in the discussion and resolution of diverse international topics, having embarked on diverse and visible diplomatic campaigns. Chile successfully applied twice for a non-permanent member of the Security Council of the UN (1996-7, 2003-4), four times for the Economic and Social Council of the UN and has had a continuous participation in the Commission on Human Rights of the UN. It successfully promoted the candidacy of Juan Somavia for Director-General of the International Labour Organization (1999) and that of José Miguel Insulza for Secretary-General of OAS (2005) (he was later re-elected). Chile also fostered Bilateral Free Trade Agreements and promoted its participation in economic associations – in particular the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, while promoting its market-driven economic model (Wehner 2009).

Chile has thus adopted a foreign policy with liberal overtones that mimics that of the industrialized democracies of OECD. The Chilean Foreign Ministry portrays the country’s foreign policy as based on permanent principles and programmatic objectives. These include: multilateralism, respect for the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, respect for international law, the commitment to peaceful resolution of controversies and the promotion of human rights. Chile has been one of the active promoters of the human security concept, endorsed by like-minded governments (including Canada, Norway, and Sweden) and summarized in the concept of Responsibility to Protect. Its bilateral cooperation in Haiti heavily relies on this principle in every field -economic, security, environment. Chile proposes a global approach to overcome underdevelopment through the encouragement of free trade, modernization of the State and programs to overcome poverty and inequality (Alvear 2004). As a result, Chilean involvement in Haiti serves its professed foreign policy goals, as it shoulders multilateral efforts to promote peace and regional stability and international solidarity (Feldmann and Montes 2010; Wilhelmy and Durán 2003). It also helps mitigating a certain degree of international isolation. This vision was restated candidly by Chile’s former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alejandro Foxley: “Chile had

---

the intention to help Haiti not only for humanitarian reasons, but in order to increase its international prestige as well. Prestige yields good dividends by boosting leadership, something that may translate into more investment which is beneficial to the country” (cited in Feldmann and Montes 2010).

Chile’s cooperation efforts in Haiti have been influenced by the above described Weltanschauung, asserting a market-oriented economic and social policies (Castiglioni 2005). It thus fosters a development model that removes the state’s role as an engine for economic development and promotes an assistentialist ethos in the social sphere. In the absence of a strategy directed by one single actor in Haiti, Chilean cooperation schemes seem to lack coherence and focus, particularly if one takes into consideration Haitian political culture, rooted in the idea that everything comes from the central government.

*Argentina under Kirchner’s governments*

Following the collapse of the national economy in 2001, Argentina gradually overcame the crisis. Two main factors propelled the recovery: a commodity boom and the devaluation of the peso. With the election of Nestor Kirchner in April 2003, Argentina abandoned the path of unconditional alignment with the United States and sought a more autonomous stance. It prioritized economic growth, rapprochement with neighbouring countries (particularly, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay) and a diversification of the country’s international engagements –including bilateral agreements on energy and agriculture cooperation with Venezuela (Follieti 2005; Malacalza 2010).

In its first years in office, Nestor Kirchner focused on economics. The priority was to control the domestic social emergency and overcome the severe liquidity problems that the 2001 default on the external public debt generated with the international financial institutions. When economic growth resumed, Argentina sought greater international visibility. In the region, this included Argentina’s leadership in the creation of UNASUR and its important role in MINUSTAH. At the multilateral level, for example, Argentina joined the push in the G-20 to cap global food prices, an initiative that was consistent with its support for food security in Haiti (Lengyel 2010).

Two main elements mark Argentina’s approach international cooperation: first, the concern with domestic development combined with the rejection to any “one size fits all” solution and the promotion of “locally-grounded” initiatives to properly attend recipient’s development needs; second, the conviction that recipient countries have to be fully involved in the design and implementation of programs. Argentina’s approach to cooperation can be fairly summed-up as largely “demand-driven” and *ad hoc*. Accordingly, the needs identified in partner countries and also capacities available at home orient Argentinean interventions (Follieti 2005; Malacalza 2010; Lengyel 2006).

Argentina’s recent involvement in Haiti epitomizes the above rationale. When the food crisis hit in 2008, Argentina spotted an opportunity to respond to a major Haitian need by demonstrating its expertise in the promotion of small-scale agriculture and other grass roots responses to a major economic crisis. Argentina quickly offered to extend its own Pro-Huerta program to Haiti, to promote household agriculture and local food security in particularly vulnerable areas of the country. Argentina’s initiative was seen as a compelling way to link Haiti’s needs and Argentina’s expertise in agriculture.

Chart 2 summarizes the arguments we present in this section regarding the developmental models and their impact on the foreign policies of the ABC countries.
### Chart 2. The ABC development models, global approaches and goals of foreign policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Development domestic model</th>
<th>Global approach</th>
<th>Main foreign policy goal</th>
<th>Haiti is an opportunity to…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Developmentalist/Industrial/Agrifood</td>
<td>Power-seeking and normative</td>
<td>Global player as rule-maker</td>
<td>Denounce the unfairness inherent in the international order and gain prestigious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>State-led/Agrifood</td>
<td>Pragmatic with some normative focus</td>
<td>Leadership as regional player</td>
<td>Reject “one size fits all” solution and promote “locally-grounded” initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Market-driven/Natural resources</td>
<td>Pragmatic Free Trade Agreements (FTA)</td>
<td>Global player as rule-taker</td>
<td>Promote the Human Security concept and the Responsibility to Protect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own elaboration*

### The ABC countries and the quest for pre-eminence

In addition to discrepancies stemming from diverse philosophical views on economic development and foreign assistance, unfulfilled expectations concerning cooperation among ABC countries also result from surreptitious, historical rivalries. A particularly salient issue concerns their competition for pre-eminence in regional affairs. Brazil, Argentina and Chile have been categorized in the academic literature as intermediate states, ‘would-be great powers’ and middle powers. This characterizations captures these countries emerging status, emphasize their regional predominance and their role as regional peacemakers. In the case of Brazil, it also underscores its global ambitions (Hurrell 2007, Soares de Lima and Hirst 2006).

While ABC countries share a status as regional powers, there are salient differences among them regarding their size, capabilities, and scopes (Pazo 2005). With a population of approximately 200 million people, a robust, modern industrial sector and sizable human capital, Brazil is considered the South America’s *hegemon* (Buzan and Weaver 2004). Brazil aims at projecting its image beyond the region on a global level and at increasing its visibility and impact in international relations and its role as a global actor. In this sense, Brazil is perceived as a global player and projects its global

---

8 Different attributes have been ascribed to intermediate states and middle powers. According to Nolte, “it makes sense not to act on the assumption of only one global power hierarchy but rather to presuppose a parallel and superposed system of global, regional and, in some cases, sub-regional power hierarchies, which are in a permanent process of interaction” (Nolte 2007:9). The status of middle or regional power is a social category that depends on the perceptions of “others” on the corresponding power hierarchy perceived by other states (Nolte 2007:9).
identity as a “voice” for the developing world in crucial international debates (John de Souza 2008; Sweig 2010). With a much smaller population (40 million) but significant human and technical capabilities, Argentina has lesser of an influence in regional affairs, let alone globally. Although transformed into a major economic powerhouse in the region, Chile is a small country (17 million inhabitants) that simply lacks the human and technical resources of its much larger neighbours.

As indicated earlier, these three nations have historically competed for influence and power. Border frictions have also influenced -and soured- their relations. In the case of Argentina and Brazil, competition hinges on pre-eminence in the region. Although smaller, Argentina has fiercely competed with Brazil: its strategy consisted, to the extent possible, in counterbalancing and constraining Brazil’s actions by refusing to grant them the necessary acceptance and legitimacy. Chile, for its part, holds no regional ambition and clearly has no desire to compete with Brazil; on the contrary, it has acted as a traditional as a loyal ally (Sweig 2010). Chile’s supportive attitude with Brazil serves the purpose of keeping in check Argentina, country with which it has a complex, competitive relation characterized by cyclical periods of frictions and distension (Buzan and Waever 2004).

The aforementioned undercurrents and tensions have come to fore, although furtively, in the Haitian case working against closer cooperation. Albeit it may not be pronounced in the official discourse, Argentina perceives MINUSTAH as a process that serves Brazil as a platform to project power in world affairs, particularly within the UN System. It also is worried about Chile’s growing stature and influence in the region, although this is mitigated by a marked improvement in bilateral relations. Chile’s participation in ABC coordination efforts is pivotal because its presence and stance helps to improve relations between Brazil and Argentina.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the attempts undertaken by ABC countries to deepen and enhance their cooperation in foreign policy. It has suggested that the 2004 Haitian crisis constituted a very propitious opportunity to advance substantively in the convergence of their external diplomatic agendas. Our main contention was that Haiti presented a golden opportunity to deepen cooperation among ABC countries but that the latter did not seize it. Three main factors account for this failure: First, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile embrace philosophically different models of economic development and therefore view development through different lenses. As Chart 2 summarized, Brazil’s development cooperation approach is developmental and industrialist, has evident South-South cooperation overtones and strives to transform the country into a global player. With more modest goals -and means-, Argentina is strongly influenced by agro-industrialist activities. Chile fosters a highly pragmatic model that conceives development cooperation as driven by the private sector. Second, there is an underlying competitive spirit derived from historical rivalries that works against stronger cooperation, even in the face of common challenges. Given its’ size and power, Brazil strives to lead in South America. While Argentina attempts to counterbalance Brazilian pre-eminence, Chile bandwagons, knowing it is too weak to counter Brazil. Argentina and Chile, meanwhile, compete for influence and prestige behind Brazil. Third, different views regarding development strategies inform in turn different preferences regarding state building efforts and shape their real commitment towards honouring the Paris Declaration. Fourth, each of the three countries pursue different interests derived from
their own ideological preferences as well as domestic pressures that constrain their room for manoeuvring and become a difficult stumbling block for joint initiatives. Brazil seeks a global status by denouncing the unfairness of the international order and gaining more prestigious through the dispatch of industrial infrastructure and agricultural development projects. Argentina is trying to consolidate its state-led and agrofood development domestic model and seeks to expand in Haiti its conviction that “locally-grounded” initiatives are better and more adaptable than “one size fits all” solutions as the Pro Huerta Program try to demonstrate. **Much to the dismay of many, ABC countries have found it problematic to substantively advance in joint cooperation efforts given the different levels of adherence the principles of Aid Effectiveness Agenda.**

In sum, ABC cooperation is clearly demand-driven and focused on the sectors where governmental organs have implemented successful policies with short-term results. Since volatility of engagement (not only aid volumes, but also diplomatic engagement and field presence) is potentially destabilising for fragile states, ABC countries must improve aid predictability and ensure mutual consultation and co-ordination to improve the cooperation efforts.

Beyond lost opportunities, however, the corollary of this pattern is that their individual efforts have fallen short of helping to improve the life condition of the Haitian population on a large scale. Following Galtung’s (1969) concept of positive peace, while there has been an improvement in the general security conditions in the country, more lasting changes are few and far apart to a transformation of the economic, political and social conditions that fuel war or, in the Haitian case, that generate the state fragility. **ABC countries have done little to avoid contributing to creating a fragile, artificial peace in the country—peacekeeping.** Their programs, crafted in many cases with little if any planning, have been as much influenced by domestic preferences and capabilities as by the needs of the target population; they have not been able to advance meaningful peace-building efforts that can substantively alter the chances of a better future for the Haitian population.

**Bibliography**


Ruz, María Inés. 2010. Ex jefa de relaciones internacionales del Ministerio de Defensa de Chile. Interview by authors July 7, Santiago de Chile


Valler Filho, Wladimir. 2007. *O Brasil e a Crise Haitiana: A Cooperação técnica como instrumento de solidariedade e de ação diplomática*, FUNAG.


**Author bios**

Andreas E. Feldmann is Associate Professor of Political Science at the Instituto de Ciencia Política of the Pontifical Catholic University in Santiago de Chile.

Miguel Lengyel is Professor and Director of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences Argentina (FLACSO Argentina).

Bernabé Malacalza is Researcher at FLACSO Argentina and the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET).

Antonio Ramalho is Professor of International Relations at University of Brasilia, Brazil.