

**The Strategic Triad: Form and Content in Brazil's Triangular
Cooperation Practices**

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ABSTRACT

Triangular cooperation, in which two countries form a partnership to lend technical assistance to a third country, is a growing model of technical cooperation in the developing world. Why do developing countries participate in triangular cooperation, and how are these arrangements different from bilateral and multilateral linkages? An analysis of Brazilian triangular cooperation arrangements reveals that, in addition to offering pragmatic solutions, triangular cooperation is a tactic for national self-promotion within a broader strategy of foreign relations. The spread of triangular cooperation marks a shift in both the configuration and politics of international cooperation networks.

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Introduction

In March 2000, the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), an office within the country's Ministry of Foreign Relations, signed the Japan-Brazil Partnership Program, in which the two nations pledge to collaborate in providing technical assistance to Portuguese-language countries in Africa and to East Timor. One of the program's key projects entailed training educators for remote training in public health, in partnership with Brazil's renowned public health foundation, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz (FIOCRUZ). Five years later, when Brazil's President Lula Inácio da Silva made an official visit to Japan, he and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi issued a joint statement lauding the agreement's accomplishments and stressing the importance of triangular cooperation in technical assistance (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, 2005).

Triangular cooperation, in which a developing country partners with either another developing country or an industrialized counterpart to lend technical assistance to a third country, is a growing model of technical cooperation in the developing world. Despite the spread of these tripartite arrangements, we still know little about their form and function within the global network of cooperation relations. Why do developing countries participate in triangular cooperation, and how are these arrangements different from bilateral and multilateral linkages?

Most of the literature on technical cooperation focuses either on bilateral relations or on multilateral channels, offering only clues as to why countries might sometimes prefer to partner up to lend assistance to a third party. This chapter analyzes both the form and content of technical assistance within triangular cooperation. What motivates developing countries such as Brazil to engage in triangular cooperation? How do those governments justify lending resources through triangular cooperation when those countries are themselves net recipients of aid and technical assistance?

To help answer these questions, I draw on the social networks perspective. I begin examining this new configuration of technical assistance by drawing on Georg Simmel's (1950) micro-sociological distinction between dyads and triads and transposing this framework to the macro level of South-South technical assistance. I apply Simmel's emphasis on the need for understanding the *form* of social interaction in order to grasp the *content* of interaction, analyzing both the configuration and meaning of triangular cooperation.

Background

Technical assistance between developing countries is not a new phenomenon. In 1974, the General Assembly created a Special Unit within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to boost technical cooperation among developing countries. Until the 1990s, however, South-South cooperation was carried out primarily through bilateral agreements. In the 1990s, a network began to emerge among Southern countries, facilitated by international organizations. This emerging network was characterized by the appearance of regional nodes—primarily India, Brazil, and South Africa—with the frequent participation of China. For example, in November of 1997, the UNDP’s Special Unit for Triangular Cooperation convened a meeting for 23 countries that had become key nodes of South-South cooperation, including China, India, Brazil, and South Africa. Over the next few years, some of these pivotal countries launched network-formation initiatives of their own. In 2003, Brazil teamed with India and South Africa to launch a joint program for cross-regional poverty alleviation. In March 2007, the foreign ministers met in New Delhi to further the New Delhi Agenda for Cooperation, the main charter of the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Forum. The Agenda included not only clauses to strengthen trade among the three countries, but also provisions to boost cooperation in tackling poverty.

In addition to the emergence of this node-heavy network of South-South cooperation, over the past ten years new configurations of cooperation have emerged within the network. One such new form is triangular cooperation,¹ which has gained ground over the past five years. A joint document by Japan and the UNDP provides a definition of the arrangement:

Triangular South-South cooperation is becoming increasingly popular as a way of fostering development by leveraging the best features of cooperation between developing countries with assistance from developed countries. A Triangular South-South cooperation activity can be the initiative of one or more Southern countries that wish to cooperate with one another. In order to maximize their financial, logistical and technical resources, such countries can ask for the support of a Northern donor as a third partner. Alternatively, a donor can partner with a developing country willing to provide technical cooperation to other Southern partners and whose initiative will make triangular cooperation the Northern donor’s priorities and interests. The Northern donor would then offer to support South-South cooperation through a triangular approach by providing financial and/or technical support. (UNDP, 1999)

¹ The idea of triangular cooperation is not entirely new. Wai’s (1982) book *Interdependence in a World of Unequals: African-Arab-OECD Economic Cooperation for Development* endorses triangular cooperation among those three country groups, highlighting the complementarity of their resource endowments.

In 2004, the UNDP's *Forging a Global South* report, published by its Special Unit for South-South Cooperation (the new name of the Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries unit) stressed the rapid spread of this configuration and emphasized its growing importance for developing human resources and for building up research and institutional capacity. In its report, the UNDP emphasizes the potential of triangular cooperation to tap into centers of excellence and knowledge networks within the developing world. Understanding the politics behind these cooperation arrangements, however, requires a grasp of both form and content.

Building a Framework

Why do developing countries lend assistance to other developing countries, and how do they justify this lending to their constituencies when their own resources are often scarce? Similarly, how do states justify borrowing from another country that is frequently labeled as developing? And how are these dynamics affected by triangular cooperation, more specifically? While this chapter does not aim to provide full answers to these questions, I propose a framework for analyzing those issues.

Answering these questions requires an understanding not only of the form of networks and linkages, but also of the politics of lending and borrowing in technical cooperation. The scholarship on education transfer has shown that institutions (agencies, governments, organizations) that engage in education lending must also justify their lending activities, especially when their own resources are scarce. For instance, Steiner-Khamsi (2004) has identified three reasons why international organizations lend education models. First, they hope to show their constituents that their own projects are effective and desirable. Second, the cost of education transfer might in fact be relatively low given the division of labor in international organizations. And third, cookie-cutter programs developed at headquarters are generally easier to implement than custom-designed programs.

Agencies and governments also have various motivations to engage in education lending. For instance, Japan's growing involvement in lending technical assistance was triggered in part by the country's superior performance on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). The enhanced legitimacy that comes with such results gives high scorers added visibility on the international scene.

Assistance between developing countries also entails complex politics and modes of justification. For instance, government initiatives for student exchanges between African countries and China present political and strategic opportunities for both parties. China can use these exchanges to boost its political influence in Africa, and African countries can use them to challenge the colonial heritage within their education systems (Gillespie, 2001).

The networks perspective in sociology can add to the understanding of technical cooperation accumulated through the literature on education transfer. The relevance of the networks perspective to education transfer has already been acknowledged (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). Education transfers take place through ties among social actors such as governments, institutions, agencies, and individuals. These social ties are established and maintained through student exchanges, technical cooperation programs, and the diffusion of institutional organizational forms, educational materials, and other concrete innovations. In addition to analyzing the structure of education transfers, the literature has also begun to examine the content of those ties, highlighting asymmetrical relationships and power dynamics.²

The social networks perspective within the social sciences can help to shed light on these forms and dynamics. Broadly put, the social networks perspective has two key traditions. The sociocentric perspective focuses on the structural properties of relations rather than the individual relationships themselves. Methodologically, social scientists working within this tradition rely primarily on quantitative approaches using matrices, cluster and graph-based analyses, and network visualization. The second tradition—the egocentric perspective—focuses instead on the networks of specific social actors, starting with a single individual or institution. Studies adopting this perspective tend to rely heavily on survey methods.

The sociocentric perspective builds on Georg Simmel’s work on the configuration of social ties and the implications of form for the content of interaction. Simmel (1950) argued that the size of a social group was key to understanding the interactions among the group’s constituents. Simmel (1950) argued that dyads are the most basic form of interaction and exchange, involving immediate reciprocity between the two social actors involved.

When a third social actor transforms a dyad into a triad, the norms of reciprocity are weakened; within this configuration, actors may pursue strategies that generate competition, alliances, or mediation. In this sense, a triad (and any larger group) is far more than the sum of its individual parts.³ Simmel argued that social interaction within a triad differs from the dyad in that the triad offers greater possibilities in strategies, competition, alliances, and mediation. Thus, far more than in a dyad, a triad develops a group structure that is independent of its individual components.

² Although recent methodological advances in quantitative network analysis have not yet been employed within education transfer literature, there is probably enough data on transnational exchanges that such studies can now be undertaken.

³ As Ritzer (1992) has noted, small groups tend to restrict the behaviors of their members, where in larger groups members enjoy greater individual freedom. When the size of a group increases, the direct ties between members are diluted, and a greater number of relation types are possible.

In contrast to Weber and Durkheim, who tended to focus on larger social groups or society as a whole, Simmel's distinction between dyads and triads was microsociological—an observation about social interaction at the level of individuals and small groups. Here we transpose this theoretical framework to a higher level of aggregation: that of organizations and states. One key caveat: norms of reciprocity between individuals are not necessarily equivalent to those between governments, whose interaction is constrained by official treaties and regulations as well as informal rules of international conduct. Nevertheless, even at a higher unit of analysis the form of social groups offers clues as to the content of interaction.

Thinking systematically about the differences between dyadic and triadic arrangements within international cooperation relations will help to clarify the unique characteristics of triangular cooperation arrangements. Thus we can ask: Why do governments engage in triangular cooperation? And, more specifically: does this particular configuration offer Southern lending countries more space for maneuvering within the international arena?

Data and Methods

To examine the dynamics of triangular cooperation, I focus on the case of Brazil. Not only has Brazil been proactive in building up South-South relations over the past ten years, it has also played a significant role in the dissemination of triangular cooperation as a form of technical assistance. The Brazilian Cooperation Agency (Agência Brasileira de Cooperação, or ABC) includes a special division devoted exclusively to technical cooperation between developing countries (TCDC), and this division has initiated some triangular cooperation projects being implemented in South and Central America, Africa, and Asia.

I analyze documents pertaining to technical cooperation that have been published by the ABC, including texts outlining Brazil's strategy for pursuing international partnerships and documents about specific treaties and projects, available through the agency's triangular cooperation DC Projects Database (ABC, 2005). I analyze the content and language of these official documents to identify the triangular cooperation arrangements in which Brazil participates, as well as the different types of justification offered by the Brazilian government for engaging in triangular cooperation. Finally, I complement this analysis of Brazilian documents by examining documents published by Brazil's counterparts in triangular cooperation.

By focusing on Brazil as a key player, I aim to clarify both the form that triangular cooperation arrangements take, and a key aspect of their content: namely, the range of justifications offered by a state participating in triangular cooperation.

Findings

Form

Configurations in international technical cooperation range from dyadic arrangements, in which states or agencies enter into bilateral agreements, and multiplex arrangements, in which a number of countries or agencies form a network of cooperation agreements (sometimes within the scope of international organizations such as the UN). Triangular cooperation, which entails a triadic arrangement, can be seen as an intermediate between bilateral and multilateral technical cooperation arrangements. The case of Brazil offers insight into this variety of arrangements.

Brazil's role in triangular cooperation is reflected in the institutional history of government agencies that deal with international technical assistance. In the late 1980s, Brazil's federal government established the ABC. The agency, a part of the Ministry of External Relations, coordinates Brazil's international technical cooperation—both that received from foreign donors and that provided to other countries. The ABC has a special division devoted entirely to South-South cooperation carried out by Brazilian government agencies, universities, and NGOs. As of this writing, the agency was coordinating 86 TCDC projects, of which approximately 50% were in Latin America, 25% in Africa, and 25% in East Timor. Moreover, the number of projects grew fast: in 2003 alone, the agency launched an additional 36 new projects. Around 70% of ABC's South-South projects relate to education, agriculture, health, and the environment.

The ABC has also been participating in a growing number of programs that deal specifically with triangular cooperation by partnering with key industrialized countries to maximize its capacity for triangular cooperation projects. As of 2007, Brazil has established or is in the process of establishing triangular cooperation treaties with several industrialized countries. The main partners as of 2007 were Japan, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Germany through the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), and the United Kingdom, through Department for International Development (DFID). Most projects focus on public health (mainly HIV/AIDS prevention), education, and a variety of agricultural issues. One pilot project, for example, involves a partnership between Brazil and the UK to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Bolivia. Another partnership with JICA taps into Brazil's FIOCRUZ Institute to train East Timorese distance-learning tutors in public health education.

More recently, Brazil has been partnering with other Southern regional leaders in technical assistance, notably South Africa and India, to expand and extend triangular cooperation into a wider-reaching network for South-South cooperation. The India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Forum has recently established a fund—to be managed by the UNDP—to help pool resources in the fight against poverty. India and Brazil have each so far committed US\$100,000, and South Africa has added \$50,000 to the pot

(Devraj, 2007). Areas of cooperation include health, information technology, civil aviation, and defense.

The spread of triangular cooperation arrangements involving these regional leaders reflects a change in the network configuration of technical assistance, with interconnected regional nodes emerging as alternatives for partnerships with industrialized countries. This represents not only a change in the form in which cooperation occurs among developing countries—it also signals a shift in the reasons (explicitly and implicitly) why developing countries engage in these activities. As Simmel (1950) wrote about small social groups, the form of social ties yields clues as to the content of social ties. The next session examines in greater detail one aspect of content: the justifications provided by countries engaging in triangular cooperation, focusing once again on the case of Brazil.

Content: Justifications for Engagement

How does the Brazilian government justify its participation in triangular cooperation? Government documents refer to the ABC's triangular cooperation efforts as part of Brazil's foreign policy strategy. In 2004, the ABC's South-South Cooperation Division (*Cooperação Técnica entre Países em Desenvolvimento*, CTPD) stated that its objectives included “prioritizing technical cooperation programs that strengthen Brazil's relations with its partners in development, especially with those countries that are priorities for Brazil's foreign policy” (ABC, 2007a). Thus, the Brazilian government explicitly acknowledges that participation in triangular cooperation is not only a goal unto itself but also serves the broader purpose of furthering international relations.

In fact, CTPD identifies a number of priorities in its mission statement:

To honor commitments made by the President and the Minister of External Relations during trips abroad; South American countries; Haiti; African countries, especially Portuguese-language countries and East Timor; Other Latin American and Caribbean countries; To support the Community of Portuguese Language Countries; To expand Brazil's triangular cooperation initiatives with industrialized countries (through their respective agencies and international organizations). (ABC, 2007a)

These priorities reflect Brazil's aspirations to boost its relations with (and influence upon) not only its neighbors in Latin America but also countries elsewhere with which it shares historic or linguistic ties. In addition, the mission statement recognizes that a more visible stance within the international arena in turn opens up more possibilities for technical cooperation. A section of the ABC website dealing with triangular cooperation states that “As Brazil attains a higher position within international forums, it becomes a central country for this type of cooperation policy” (ABC, 2007b).

These explicitly stated priorities show that the Brazilian government uses technical cooperation to further a number of broader foreign policy goals. As the ABC mission statement for South-South cooperation states, “The actions of the General Office for Cooperation between Developing Countries constitute an important instrument for foreign relations, which Brazil has drawn on to secure a positive and growing presence in countries and regions of primary interest” (ABC, 2005b).

A more nuanced analysis of the ABC charter and documents reveals that Brazil pursues this goal of enhancing its standing in the international arena through cooperation with developing countries— including triangular cooperation—by drawing on five broad modes of justification. These are ideal types rather than mutually exclusive categories; boundaries are imprecise, and types often overlap; still it is useful to create a typology for analytical purposes.

Pragmatism

Like other developing countries, Brazil has pragmatic reasons for engaging in South-South technical cooperation. Countries and agencies that have undergone equivalent experiences often have a great deal of accumulated practical knowledge to share. Moreover, some countries have developed niches of expertise that help legitimize the lending and borrowing of programs and projects from other development knowledge from other developing countries.

This niche expertise might come from private initiative or from the public sector; even in countries whose state apparatuses deviate in large part from Weberian ideals of meritocratic and coherent bureaucracy there may exist “islands of competence” that generate successful development programs (Evans, 1995). The ABC states in its website, “Brazil has an important stock of technical knowledge and imaginative solutions that can be applied in countries that need resources and ‘know-how’” (ABC, 2007). Thus, within this mode of justification, the Brazilian government posits programs that have been deemed as successful as “a better fit” for other developing countries than solutions proposed by industrialized countries:

Many developing countries face problems similar to ours in the fields of public administration, health, education, agriculture, environment, small enterprises, among others, and our experience in finding appropriate solutions to them is frequently sought . . . [Brazil] has a significant number of institutions of excellence in various areas of knowledge. (ABC, 2007b).

The same logic appears not only in bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements, but also in triangular cooperation. In 2001, the United Nations Population Fund forged a partnership with the ABC aimed at tapping into the expertise that Brazilian public health institutions have developed in the prevention and treatments of sexually transmitted

diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS (in 2003 Brazil received the Gates Award for Global Health for its comprehensive response to the epidemic). The program seeks to facilitate the transference of Brazilian knowledge in these areas to other Latin American and Caribbean countries, Portuguese-speaking Africa, and East Timor.

Altruism

In addition to (and sometimes alongside with) instrumental justifications for engaging in triangular cooperation, Brazil also posits itself as an altruistic lender of knowledge and experience. The ABC stresses that Brazil's technical cooperation with other developing countries "occurs through the transference of Brazilian technical knowledge and experience, on a non-commercial basis, in order to promote the autonomy of its partners." (ABC, 2005b)

It goes on to assert that:

The main strategy of Brazil's technical cooperation lending—which is not assistentialist, has no profit goals, no commercial objectives and focuses on the institutional strengthening of our partners, a fundamental condition for the effective transference and absorption of knowledge. (ABC, 2005b)

By highlighting the non-commercial aspect of these cooperation agreements, Brazil seeks to enhance its positive image and boost its legitimacy as a non-exploitative participant in international relations. Triangular cooperation offers the Brazilian government one more way of promoting its claims of altruism.

Strengthening Cultural Ties

As ABC's list of priorities for South-South transfer indicates, the Brazilian government also relies on technical cooperation as a concrete way of strengthening ties with other countries in the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), as well as its Spanish-speaking neighbors in Latin America: "[Brazil] maintains cultural ties of friendship with other developing countries, and it has a history of overcoming problems that are typical of countries of the so-called 'Third World'" (ABC 2007a).

Justifications for international exchanges based on cultural affinity are not a novelty. Since the 1970s, Brazil has promoted trade relations with Portuguese-language African countries, and its foreign ministers repeatedly have highlighted ethnic ties between Brazil and those countries as a driving force behind these exchanges. Cultural affinity might also serve pragmatic ends: shared culture may facilitate labor mobility and technology transfer, since experts share language and can thus collaborate on projects without having to overcome significant linguistic barriers.

In addition to citing cultural affinity with certain developing countries, the Brazilian government also cites cultural ties in justifying partnerships with industrialized countries. For example, the ABC mission statement mentions that, in its triangular cooperation partnership with Japan (JBPP), Brazil's government takes into consideration the historically friendly relations, close economic ties, and the presence of some 1.4 million Japanese immigrants and their descendants in the Federative Republic of Brazil. (MRE, 2005)

Driving this justification is the belief that common historical and cultural heritage facilitates the exchange of experience and knowledge:

“Over the past three years, the Brazilian government has placed special emphasis to the strengthening of its technical cooperation with the Portuguese speaking countries of Africa, with East Timor and with South and Central American countries”. (ABC, 2007a).

This logic extends to triangular cooperation. The JBPP was originally designed to implement triangular cooperation programs in African lusophone countries. More recently it has grown to encompass non-Portuguese countries in the region, such as Ghana, but the emphasis remains on fellow members of the lusophone community.

Regional Leadership

A key component of Brazilian foreign relations over the past few years has been the goal of regional leadership (Soares de Lima & Hirst, 2006). Brazil also uses South-South transfer, including triangular cooperation, to further its goal of consolidating a position of regional leadership in Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2004, Brazil led the United Nations peacekeeping mission to Haiti, sending 1,200 troops—Brazil's largest foreign military deployment since World War II. Initiatives like leadership of the Haiti peacekeepers deployment sharply contrast with the inward-looking foreign policy that characterized Brazil during the latter half of the twentieth century.

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, elected through the Workers Party in October 2002, has made regional leadership one of the key goals of Brazilian foreign policy. In 2005, during one of his radio “Coffee with the President” broadcasts, Lula declared that, because it is the largest economy in South America, “Brazil has an obligation to provide the conditions for the economic growth of neighboring countries (Crispim, 2005)”.

Technical cooperation with other developing countries is seen by the Brazilian government as another way to further the goal of regional leadership. As one of the ABC directives for TCDC states, the agency seeks to “prioritize technical cooperation programs that allow for the intensification of Brazil's relations with partners in development, especially with those of primary interest for Brazil's foreign policy” (ABC

2007a). In ABC's list of priorities for TCDC, strengthening cooperation ties with other South American countries comes second only to the top item of honoring "commitments made by the President and the Minister of External Relations during trips abroad."

Given this goal, the links with industrialized countries in some triangular cooperation arrangements might provide Brazil with added legitimacy as a lender of technical assistance within Latin America. This seems to occur despite the arguable loss of legitimacy of industrialized countries as lenders of aid. The supposed enhanced added legitimacy is seen to help compensate for Brazil's long history of affable yet distant relations Brazil has maintained with most other countries in the region (Costa Vaz, 2004).

Networking with Other Regional Leaders

Yet the foreign relations ambitions of Lula's administration extend far beyond South America. In addition to trying to make Brazil a regional leader, the Brazilian government since 2002 has attempted to become a spokesman for developing countries. Initiatives linked to this goal include the founding of the G20 Group, which lobbies for industrialized countries to lower agricultural subsidies, and seeking a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. So far these efforts have had limited success, but more specifically, the Brazilian government has been trying to forge and strengthen ties with leaders of other regions—the so-called "pivotal countries" (South African Permanent Mission, 2003). The India-Brazil-South Africa, or IBSA forum, is arguable the most active of such alliances. Russia and China are also entering a cooperative coalition (known informally as BRICS), although it has not yet been formalized. Through triangular cooperation arrangements related to these alliances, Brazil works to amplify its influence overseas.

Within this mode of justification, triangular cooperation serves as an efficient way to expand Brazil's network (and more broadly the network of South-South cooperation) because regional hubs are multiplex: they feature a large number of localized ties. By strengthening its links with regional leaders elsewhere, Brazil can tap into those many ties and thus reach into a broader territory, directly or indirectly.

Conclusion

This paper set out to explore the form and content of an emerging type of technical cooperation arrangement within the network of international cooperation ties: triangular cooperation. Research on Brazil's technical cooperation ties showed that triangular cooperation has emerged as an intermediary form between two traditional forms of cooperation: bilateral and multilateral. More specifically, the appearance of regional nodes of cooperation (not just Brazil but also India and South Africa) marks a shift both in the configuration of the international network of cooperation and in the politics involved in participating in this network.

This shift can be understood in terms of both form and content of the ties in technical assistance. As the sociologist Simmel (1950) noted in his study of small social groups, understanding the form of a social configuration can yield clues about the content of social interaction. A triad differs from a dyad in that it offers participants with many more options for strategies and alliances. Thus, both form and content shift as a social group grows in size from two to three members.

In terms of form, triangular cooperation is an intermediate between bilateral technical cooperation and the direct utilization of broad multilateral channels. Pivotal countries like Brazil, South Africa, and India in particular act as nodes for the growth of South-South transfer network, and triangular cooperation is emerging as a major strategy to strengthen this network. This new configuration allows regional nodes and their partners to tap into localized knowledge and sources of innovation that might be overlooked in more traditional forms of cooperation and technical assistance. Brazil's experiences with HIV/AIDS education might provide other developing countries with suitable approaches to the problem.

In addition to offering pragmatic solutions to common problems in South-South transfer, triangular cooperation constitutes a specific tactic for national self-promotion within a broader strategy of foreign relations. States seldom, if ever, engage in technical cooperation within a political vacuum; rather, they typically forge cooperation ties at least in part to advance broader regional or global ambitions.

The motivations behind participation in triangular cooperation agreements yield clues as to how they fit within a state's broader foreign policy goals. An analysis of the language of documents related to triangular cooperation reflects the multitude of strategies available to Brazil as a participant in triangular cooperation arrangements. The documents reveal a multitude of frequently overlapping justifications for participating in triangular cooperation, ranging from pragmatism to altruism, cultural affinity, aspirations to regional leadership, and efforts to link up with regional leaders elsewhere.

Together, these different justifications reflect Brazil's desire to expand its presence within international arenas. Engagement in triangular cooperation has served to further the Brazilian government's broader goal of consolidating Brazil's position as a "pivotal" Southern country in the international arena. These findings are consistent with recent efforts by the Brazilian government outside the arena of technical cooperation, for instance by leading the UN peacekeeping mission to Haiti or attempting to secure a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Yet triangular cooperation allows the Brazilian state to engage with other developing countries more directly than through multilateral channels.

Notably absent from these justifications is the desire to substitute triangular cooperation, and more broadly South-South relations, for the traditional links to industrialized countries. Because it partners an industrialized country with a developing counterpart to lend assistance to a third country, triangular cooperation represents a departure from the autarkic rhetoric of leftist developing states in earlier decades. Instead, triangular cooperation reflects a new compromise: a willingness by certain developing countries to supplement assistance from the “North” with assistance from other developing countries.

Further research on the role of triangular cooperation in international cooperation ties would benefit from two complementary approaches: a case study, an institutional analysis, and a network analysis. First, an in-depth study of a specific triangular cooperation arrangement, with insight into the participation of all three parties, would shed light on the political strategies of members. Such a study might establish the extent to which the rhetoric of individual members coincide, and whether this rhetoric matches the actual practices of technical assistance implemented through the agreement.

Second, an institutional perspective on triangular cooperation would clarify the historical and political forces that led to the emergence and recent spread of this particular form of cooperation. A longitudinal analysis would thereby enhance our understanding of how technical cooperation among developing countries fits within the shifting landscape of regional and global politics.

Finally, a bird’s eye view of cooperation networks, placing triangular cooperation within the broader scheme of international cooperation network, would give students of international relations and cooperation a better sense of how these nodes are evolving across time. Recent developments in network analysis, including quantitative methods, could be applied to either a regional or the global network of technical cooperation to identify key nodes and the role that triangular cooperation plays in the network.

Research along these lines will supplement the extant—and surprisingly scant—academic literature on triangular cooperation as well as technical assistance in general.

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