

## **THE WEIGHT OF 'TRADITION' IN MULTILATERAL COMMERCIAL NEGOTIATIONS. THE ARGENTINIAN CASE DURING THE DOHA ROUND**

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### **Abstract**

The article studies the impact of 'tradition' as a variable inside the analyses of foreign policy. For that end, it considers a particular case, the participation of Argentina in multilateral commercial negotiations. The central argument signals that, for Argentina, the negotiating tradition has had an important role as a guidance in foreign policy actions regarding multilateral commercial negotiations, especially in the moments of crisis. In addition, that, within this tradition, the main variable in the configuration of Argentinian options has been the development strategy.

### **Keywords:**

Tradition; Foreign Policy; Commercial Negotiations; WTO; Argentina

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## **THE WEIGHT OF 'TRADITION' IN MULTILATERAL COMMERCIAL NEGOTIATIONS. THE ARGENTINIAN CASE DURING THE DOHA ROUND**

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The liberal and neoliberal theories of international relations put an emphasis on how domestic conditionings are important when it comes to define States' foreign policies. In the study of the positions and strategies in international negotiations such as commercial ones, the economic conditionings have been the most widely developed within the set of specific domestic variables of such foreign policy (Rodrik 1995; Milner 1999; Frieden y Martin, 2001; Moravcsik 1997). Regardless of other elements, less tangible, they have also contributed to decision-making, and allow explaining State conducts, especially in the initial instances of negotiation processes.

From the analysis of the Argentinian case, in this article we aim to see how one of these intangible elements, the negotiating 'tradition', made up by imageries, ideas and the weight of History, have guided the policy makers decisions in one of the most important negotiations from the start of the 21st century, the Doha Round in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

This negotiation is relevant, not only due to the ambitions agenda that it presents commercially, but also as a distinctive process of the changes made during the first decade of the 21st century regarding international commercial relations. It allows us to see the reconfiguration of power relations among developed and emerging countries, as well as between the latter and the rest of the developing countries. Furthermore, it illustrates how the variations in prices of commodities and in the ways of production and commercialisation ended contributing for the configuration of the agenda in sensible subjects, priority or excluded.

Argentina is a medium-resources country that had a late incorporation in the multilateral trade regime, but, from the 1980s onwards, increased its negotiating activism in the different 'rounds'. For this country, the Doha negotiation in the star was mainly agricultural and could imply a growth of up to 20% of exports, and 5% of Gross Domestic Product (MRECIC, 2003). Regardless, due to the domestic crisis that had its epicentre in December 2001, the resources and technical, political and economic instruments for the negotiation were limited. Consequently, Argentina started the Doha Round with a high chance for having an active participation and with high levels of uncertainty.

Our hypotheses are that, for Argentina, the negotiating tradition has had an important guidance role in foreign policy actions regarding multilateral commercial negotiations, especially in the moments of crisis. Moreover, that, within this tradition, the main variable in the configuration of Argentinian options has been the development strategy.



The following points expose some theoretical and methodological considerations regarding the 'tradition' as a variable for the analysis; after it, its confirmation throughout Argentinian negotiating history and, finally, we analyse the role it had in the primary definitions of the Argentinian position and negotiating strategy in the initial moments of the Doha Round, of the WTO.

## **1. The 'negotiation tradition' in the analyses of foreign policy**

The question about how to configure the foreign policy of a country is the central interrogation from the perspective of foreign policy analyses. These started to develop with greatest intensity since the 1970s and 1980s, even beginning to become a 'sub-field' within the subject (Hudson, 2005). They are characterized by its actor-specific focus, as an opposition to the system (Hudson, 2005) and are the bases for all international and transnational relations that are based in human decisions, individually or as a group. Thus, this makes us consider that, for the understanding of the State's conduct, those who make such decisions, which are the decision-makers, national and international that have weight over them, and how their implementation takes place.

One of the variables that incorporates in these analyses gives us a throwback to *historical, cultural and social factors*, and to the role these have in the configuration of a *tradition* that will influence policy makers. According to authors such as Van Klaveren (1992) 'the values can generate demands of action by restricting the options available for the decision-making players'. In fact, these intangible elements are made up in mental maps for the actions, affecting the selection of results before multiple options, constitute institutions and, conform identities (Goldstein and Keohane, 1999). In a last stage, these elements come together in the notion of identity, regarding the self-perception that the players have regarding their place in the world and the expectations of action deriving from it. Merke agrees that 'all foreign policy needs to give a sense to the situation and build its most relevant objects. For this, foreign policy resorts to a range of identity attributes that serve to make some actions possible and restrain others. [In as much,] identity appears, simultaneously, as a precondition of the action and as reproduced by that same action' (Merke 2009: 75). Therefore, this tends to endure in time and be a more or less constant guidance of the policy.

When these elements are reiterated in the change of diplomatic actions that then conform to a 'tradition', in our case, a negotiation tradition, that will have a guidance function. We agree with him in the idea that political identity is made up as reference with a temporal system, articulated with the accumulation of experiences and interpretations of past actions, projecting to the future, giving it the meaning of the action (Aboy Carlés, 2001 in Pereyra Doval, 2013: 88).

On their part, values and history also configure in elements of the United States soft power, contributing to the perception that other States have of their own action regarding foreign policy, particularly in negotiations. As Bruening states (2007), the United States soft power is based in the continuity of the values that guide the government's actions, in the domestic plan, in the international organizations and in foreign policy.

Within the commercial policies, the relevance of this kind of studies that focalize in intangible variables has been placed in evidence by Krueger's work, accounting for the



variation of ideas regarding trade and the economic development as an explaining entity of the changes in the commercial policies in the latest years (Milner, 1999). Tussie (2009) and Botto (2007) also developed the link of the ideas and knowledge in the formulation of foreign commercial policies, facing the negotiations. Furthermore, Odell (1988) has underlined the importance of the ideas and budgets prevailing among the decision-makers at the time of explaining the selection of a certain position and negotiation strategy. In a broadest sense, Pereyra Doval (2013) analysed the weight of this variable, tradition, in case analysis, such as in the one of Brazilian foreign policy.

This, in this literature one identifies a certain line of continuity by considering the role of this intangible variable in the foreign commercial policy analyses, and/or participation in international negotiations. One also sees a connection between the way in which this tradition, identity and material bases, from the role played by the ideas or ideologies around the model or development strategy. In fact, the model or development strategy is a key for the understanding of the negotiation participation of a State. The same establishes a definition regarding which position to adopt in the international environment, how to gain advantages in it and, at the same time, how to reduce the vulnerability with which the State is exposed faced with the impacts of globalization (Stiglitz, 1998). This way, the set of historical experiences linked in the articulation between the development model and negotiation participation, configures an imaginary of 'tradition' that results as the ordering of the mental maps of negotiation agents in the individual plan.

In the following section, we expose how it has been like that in the Argentinian case, in multilateral commercial negotiations.

## **2. Methodology design for the analysis of the negotiation tradition in the Argentinian case**

As one can see from the theoretical arguments presented above, the negotiation tradition as an investigation object constitutes a complex element, difficult to operate. This consists in the identification and reconstruction, in a reference historical period (first, the negotiations during the GATT and, afterwards, the Doha Round), of the set of values, identity perceptions and predominating ideas that the negotiators and policy makers have sustained around the development model, the insertion strategy and the role assigned to the commercial negotiations in the said articulation. For that, it was necessary to adopt a unique case study approach (Gundermann Koll, 2001), that allowed to deeply research the knowledge of the Argentinian case.

The methodology applied for this work was, therefore, qualitative in nature. We resorted to several bibliographical, documental and statistical character, which are referenced throughout the following sections. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were performed with Argentinian staff involved in the Uruguay Round and in the Doha Round<sup>1</sup>. The analysis technique implemented in all cases was the content analysis,

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<sup>1</sup> We interviewed Taiana (Foreign Affairs, International and Cult Trade of Argentina, 2005-2010), Dumont (Argentinian Representative before the International Bodies in Geneva, 1999-2010), Chiaradia (Representative before the International Bodies in Geneva and the WTO, 2002-2010), Taboada (Permanent mission of the Argentinian Republic before the International Bodies in Geneva, 2002-2008) and Petri (responsible for the Unit of Agricultural and Animal Raising Policies in the Ministry of Economy, 2004-2008). The interviews were performed between September and November of 2012.



oriented to the development of the wide description of the phenomenon in question (Dey, 1993: 30).

### **3. The sources of the Argentinian in the multilateral negotiation of GATT trade and the identification of the 'negotiation tradition'**

Before the launch of the Doha Round, Argentina had already developed a certain real participation<sup>2</sup> in multilateral commercial negotiations. In literature, we particularly underline the conduct performed by this country in the Uruguay Round (Tussie, 1993; Miller, 2000). Regardless, it is possible to identify a relevant presence of the country since almost 40 years earlier. Such experiences would configure the negotiation tradition, in which many of the diplomats responsible for the process of the Doha Round subscribed themselves.

As was previously stated, in the configuration of this tradition, elements of the debate around the development strategies have been conditioning the decisions throughout the years. In Argentina, the development model has been a volatile variable, subject to the country's macroeconomic variations signed by decades by the cycle of 'stop and go' (Gerchunoff, 2006). Historically, the development of the industrial and agricultural sector had been fighting, expressing the fluctuations of the type of exchange and in the external restriction, the distribution dilemma central to the country's economy. As a result, there has been a pendulum movement between liberal and development, which had found an echo as much as in the predominant political parties, peronism and radicalism, as in the military sector, that in several occasions throughout the 20th century assumed the command of the nation's executive power<sup>3</sup>. The most active participation in the multilateral negotiations has been more close to the liberal option, forming the negotiation tradition to study.

Besides having participated in the Havana Conference, Argentina was not a founding member of the *General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade* (GATT) although it was converted in contracting party of the recent said agreement in the 11th of October 1967, under the government of Onganía<sup>4</sup>.

As Russell states, 'In the name of the economic independence the Perón government 'totally abstained' from voting the final document of the extensive United Nations Conference about Trade and Employment, held in Havana from the 21st of November, 1947, up to the 24th of March, 1948, that proposed the creation of an International Trade Organization' (Russell, 2001: 128). Behind the said abstention there were political reasons - the author defends that, for peronism, the GATT was 'a project made to measure of North-American interests' (Russell, 2001: 128) -, as well as economic –

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<sup>2</sup> This concept of Peña (1968) refers to the contents, the activism and the efficiency achieved in the international plan in the development of the negotiating conduct: it refers to tools and actions (such as the presence in key instances, the presentation of documents, the formation of pressure groups, etc.) that tend to try to influence the adoption of decisions referring to the principles, norms, rules and procedures of a certain regime, according to the aims of the negotiator (or negotiation position).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Romero (2001)

<sup>4</sup> Argentina participated in the Havana Conference, and the preparation talks in which it had forced an alternative resolution project. In total, it presented 'more than ninety changes to a total of 42 articles'. However, the evolution of the negotiations resulted against the 'national government's economic policy', that motivated the reason why the country ended by not joining the agreement (Lanús, 1984: 348-351).



fundamentally due to the early exclusion of the negotiations of the approach of food produce<sup>5</sup>.

From 1945 to 1990, the Argentinian economic policy (and foreign economic policy) balanced between an economic model based in the replacement of imports and another pointing towards open liberal experiments. It was in the scope of one of those 'liberal' rounds that Argentina joined multilateral financial institutions (International Monetary Fund and World Bank<sup>6</sup>), during the so-called "Liberating Revolution". Later, during another 'revolution', the 'Argentina' under the Onganía government, produced the above-mentioned subscription at GATT<sup>7</sup>.

According to Russell (2001) 'The steps taken by the Onganía government to a greater commercial opening, within the scope of the economic plan conducted by the minister of Economy, Adalbert Krieger Vasena, that included a general and programmed reduction of rights, made Argentina naturally join formally to the agreement in 1967'. To this 'domestic' factor, authors such as Baldinelli (1997) aggregate foreign and interdomestic elements: (i) the distancing of bilateral trade and payment covenants<sup>8</sup>, (ii) the insistence of the Brazilian government so that Argentina joined the agreement and (iii) the interest in being able to take advantage of an access quote for the sale of bovine meat to the European Economic Community, which maintained a preferential treatment regarding its ex-colonies<sup>9</sup>.

Thus, Argentina joined the GATT during the Kennedy Round. By then, Argentinian exports achieved 1,464.5 million dollars (Rapoport 2010, 2084), representing around 0.8% of world trade (United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database, 1962). Initially, the Argentinian negotiating profile inside the forum was a lot more reactive, due to the secondary role that international commercial relations had for the country (Makuc and Ablin, 1994), to the little will to concede sovereignty over the rules applied in foreign commercial policy and to the voluntary character that characterized the multilateral trade regime.

This little relative relevance assigned to these negotiations inside the agenda of Argentinian foreign policy was compensated, in fact, by the place they took in other international forums, such as that of the United Nations Conference about Trade and

<sup>5</sup> During the GATT, agricultural themes were systematically excluded from the negotiations, under the pretense that they were considered a special sector. Even if, during the negotiation of lists by lists, by specific products, some agricultural themes were included in the agenda, in the Dillon Round (1960-62) they appeared for the first time, systematically, reducing rights in soy, cotton, vegetables and preserve fruits. Regardless of these advancements, in the fourth round, the United States gained a waiver to apply quantitative restrictions over this sector, effectively leaving a great part of the agricultural question outside of the GATT. Early in the Uruguay Round, agricultural themes were approached integrally, deriving in the Agreement about Agriculture.

<sup>6</sup> On August 31, 1956, through decree-law 15.970.

<sup>7</sup> The Membership protocol was signed on September 11, 1967, and made internal on June 28, 1968, through Law No. 17799.

<sup>8</sup> Such as Baldinelli (1997) signals, these agreements originated in the 1930s, where it favored the 'interchange with border countries through the downsizing of rights non-extensible to third parties'. Agreements were also subscribed with European countries and non-border American countries. After the Second World War, these agreements were incremented with specific payment covenants, through which the central banks developed an exchange control between reciprocal exports and imports.

<sup>9</sup> The weight of the agricultural export lobby over foreign policy during the Onganía government was very strong. Amongst others, this can be appreciated in the final years of the military regime, when, according to Rapoport 'foreign policy took a turn by abandoning the idea of ideological borders' - which characterized Onganía's management -, establishing relations with Popular China and Cuba and sign a commercial agreement with Soviet Union'. This author sustains that 'Among the factors that fuelled these changes, one can mention the agro exporting interests, affected by the restrictions they found in the world markets.' (Rapoport, 2009: 37).



Development (UNCTAD) and the debates regarding the 'new international economic order' (NOEI), where Argentina played a more active role. Especially in the UNCTAD, Argentina found a space for the development of an activist foreign policy. Therefore, 'Argentina led and participated in the international debates regarding the transformation of international economic relations from moderate positions that were in agreement with its status of a country placed in the middle of the world's hierarchy and high in the region' (Russell 2010, 252). As an example and like the quoted author regarding the importance of Argentina as a regionally relevant country, one can underline the signature of the High Grace Chart, in the summit done in the country before the UNCTAD's own conference, within the scope of the Special Commission of Coordination for Latin America (CECLA). That meeting in the country had a high-profile role regarding the organization and the debates that were discussed. In its analysis, Simonoff underlines that 'Signing the act of High Grace in March 1964 was an important element of this government's multilateral policy. It was a demand of the continent's Southern countries that intended 'a rectification at the level of countries that dominated international trade' and not 'an outside help' (Zavala Ortiz, 1976: 22)' (Simonoff, 2007: 80).

This preference by other forums it was not, in fact, an obstacle. Such as Makuc and Ablin signalled 'Paradoxically, the participation of the Argentinian representatives in the GATT was always prominent, probably exceeding the priority given to the body by the authorities of Buenos Aires'<sup>10</sup> (Makuc and Ablin 1994: 2). Coinciding with this observation, one can find in Tussie (1993), references to the Argentinian presence within the coalition of less developed countries within the GATT for 1963, when the country had not yet achieved its full subscription to the agreement<sup>11</sup>.

During the Tokyo Round (1973-1979), Argentinian participation centred in the approach of the exceptions that, inside the GATT, were applied to the agricultural sector. It also participated in the search for an exception for developing countries, seen in the end of the round in the Enabling Clause.

During this period, there were important changes in Argentinian domestic policy - and foreign - with the passage, first of the governments of Cámpora and Perón of the Isabel one, after his death. E soon with the eruption of the military junta, during the years from 1976 to 1983. These changes brought a closeness to economic orthodoxy. The imaginary that ruled from then was the one of the 'Argentine 'open to the world' of the agricultural export age, that the 1880 generation had built' (Rapoport, 2009: 39). Other deep trait of transformation was the liberalization of the financial sector, that incremented the debt process. Gradually, it began to adopt a perspective more close to the (neo) liberal ideology, consolidated with Carlos Menem's neoliberal government. This political and ideological turn would signify a break in foreign policy and would lead to, such as Makuc and Ablin signalled (1994: 4) 'the evolution of Argentinian economic

<sup>10</sup> They aggregate 'Effectively, further beyond the representativeness exercised by the Argentinian successive delegations in the life of the body, the definitions and contents of the Argentinian foreign trade policy continued conditioned, during the first decade of performance in the GATT, by the dominant economic model in the country; that is, the industrialization as substitute of imports in its stage of decadence of crisis' (Makuc and Ablin, 1994 - own underline).

<sup>11</sup> Within the scope of the reformation process of the GATT centered in the findings of the Harberler Report, Tussie underlines Argentinian participation, in 1963, inside 'a group of 21 Medium-developed countries [that] adopted a less radical line (...). Instead of reforming this rule, this group asked for the extension of the existing rules to some excluded products. It proposed an action program, that incited the contracted developed parties to adopt measures about exports of less developed countries' (Tussie, 1993: 41)





policy, and especially its openness to the exterior, coincides for the first time, conceptually and factually with the guiding philosophy of the multilateral system'. Such accordance in economic thought allowed generating permissiveness for the action in the final instances of the Uruguay Round.

In the external front, the 1980s signalled by the crisis incremented the country's interest in the forum and thus, facing the Uruguay Round, the GATT started to occupy ever-increasing relevant places in the agenda of foreign economic policy.<sup>12</sup> In particular, the implementation of growing policies of grants to agricultural policies from developed countries, such as the United States and the European Community, motivated a more active participation in such negotiations. It is good to remember that, for that moment, due to internal constraints of the development model, the growth of Argentinian economy depended of the liquidity that agricultural exports could give, which meant the removal of the measures mentioned was an element of vital importance.

Therefore, during the Uruguay Round, Argentina started from having an opposing and peripheral posture to develop a highlighted participation within the negotiation process, especially centring in the approach of the agricultural area. Such as Carina Miller's research regarding the Round, the country's goals were broad: 'include agriculture in the negotiations and submit it to strict commercial rules, to gain opportunities so that its agricultural and animal products have a better access to foreign markets, prohibit or restrict domestic policies that increased disloyal competition with its exports, etc. (Miller 2000: 140).

To reach these goals, Argentina armed itself with strategies such as negotiating in coalitions and participate in key groups (such as the Morges group, the Eight Group, the informal group of the 36 and, the most known of all, the Cairns Group, all linked to the drive of agricultural negotiations). Furthermore, Argentina resorted to declarations to position itself inside the negotiations<sup>13</sup>; and the making of technical reports; and the presentation of proposals and documents for the negotiations. It also resorted to the threat of blockages (for instance, not to vote anything until there was an agreement in the agricultural area), as a way to generate power (Croome 1998; Miller 2000; Tussie 1993; Tettamanti, 1990).

Therefore, during the Punta de Este Conference, Argentina was the author of one of the three documents in discussion as proposals of Ministry Declaration. Furthermore, throughout the eight years that the negotiations lasted, it developed a protagonist participation inside the coalitions mentioned above and, in cases such as the Montreal meeting, it was able to have an influence in the negotiating conduct of other developing countries, generating pressures over the leaders of the negotiation process so there were advancements in the agricultural and textile subject of the negotiations and for that, that a balanced look of global trade was preserved<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> One has to stress, firstly, that Argentina had opposed the launch of a new round, but in fact, when the agricultural and textile subjects were included in the agenda, the country's position turned to an active interest in the negotiations.

<sup>13</sup> Even during the crisis of negotiations of 1992, President Carlos Menem sent a message to President Clinton, from the United States of America, to the presidents of the European Council and Japan's Prime-Minister, Kiichi Miyazawa, on behalf of the De la Paix Group, with the aim of soliciting to these three the exercise of a more decisive leadership in favor of the end of negotiations (Croome, 1998: 301).

<sup>14</sup> In an interview published in 1990, by the Revista América Latina/Internacional of FLACSO Argentina, Ambassador Tettamanti, the Argentinian representative before the International Bodies in Geneva, relate





During this period, Argentina also took part of two cases within the problem-solving mechanism of the GATT, connected with the Falklands. In 1982 and in 1983, with the European Economic Union, due to the embargo to the Islands, and the application of article XXI. It gave rise that, during the negotiations of the Uruguay Round, there was a strife to revise the article relating to exceptions relating to security<sup>15</sup>.

These experiences produced results that were considered as positive in light of the country's initial goals (Miller, 2000) and, as a whole, served as a process of learning for the next negotiations that the country would face on the next decade.

#### **4. The 'negotiating tradition': Argentina at the start of the Doha Round**

As we saw in the previous section, during the Uruguay Round, Argentinian negotiating tradition in international trade relations suffered an important turn. Changing the negotiating conduct that was imperative until then, the country adopted an active participation, based on a solid technical base, and with negotiation strategies that assumed the risks of exercising veto options, giving priority to convergence actions in negotiation coalitions.

Thus, when the Doha Round started, Argentina held a certain leadership inherited from the Uruguay Round, which collided with the economic, political and social crisis that was conditioning the country. In fact, since several months, Argentina was immerse in a crisis that went through all of the State's dimensions and even limited the country's foreign agenda. Negotiating foreign debt was the government's central aim. As such, the announced fourth Ministry Conference of the WTO was not priority for the management of the then president De la Rúa, other than beyond the weight that this negotiation could have for the country and the leadership that Argentina could develop in it.

In fact, in November 2001, the Argentinian Presidency engaged on a mission to Germany and sent the Chancellor to that meeting instead of the Doha Conference. Therefore, the Argentinian delegation before the WTO was in charge of second-grade staff and lost the possibility to exercise the vice-presidency that had been gained months earlier in the negotiations before Doha. While the then Vice-Chancellor Horacio Chighizola presided the delegation, along with the Agriculture, Livestock Breeding and Fishing Secretary, Regúnaga, it was ambassador Néstor Stancanelli the one in charge of defending the Argentinian position. That decision reduced Argentinian participation and depreciated the importance of the delegation as a whole when it came to seats in commissions exclusive to ministers<sup>16</sup>.

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the centrality of the agricultural theme given for the country to these negotiations, and describe the 'pragmatic' perspective with which it has decided to move the negotiations forward, which enabled to move a negotiating conduct regarding other developing countries, giving rise to punctual initiatives in the agenda's several subjects and not being afraid to 'deny support' to the negotiated set if the results did not offer an acceptable minimum to national ambitions.

<sup>15</sup> See Croome, 1998 p. 82 and p. 187

<sup>16</sup> In fact, diplomatic hierarchy is an important element in the negotiations. Without a minister, there is no entering in the Green Room', sustained Taiana in an interview performed during the investigation. The ministry figure is the one that has the capacity to compromise the country's position and strike the deal, being this the basis of the said hierarchy. In fact, of the 153 countries that took part in the Doha negotiations, only 19 state delegations were not headed by Ministers (Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Dominica, Fiji Islands, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Jamaica, Kuwait, Madagascar, Moldavia, Niger, Paraguay,



The next months, when five Presidents succeeded, were impregnated with the uncertainty derived for the institutional instability in which the country was immerse. On the other hand, those were the central months for the construction and first placement of the negotiating positions in the multilateral plan. In addition, it was there that 'tradition' played a relevant role, in the definitions of the priorities that Argentina would adopt and in the selection of the strategies undertaken.

Thus, in the negotiations Argentina first guarded itself in the negotiating practices and positioning that it had previously developed. Moreover, the negotiators, based in such tradition and prestigious past, were able to exercise a certain influence, reducing the impact of the domestic crisis in the international plan.

Particularly, the negotiation tradition identified was shaped in conducts such as the belonging to the Cairns group, a coalition of competitive agricultural export countries that do not give subventions to their exports, as well as the precedence of the reclamation for the access to markets and the liberalization of agricultural trade, over other goods. This is fully illustrated by the full adhesion to the Vision Statement document pronounced by this coalition in 1998, as well as in the identification of Australia and New Zealand as key partners in this initial stage of the negotiation process.

Other instruments, such as the activism through the presentation of technical documents, was influenced by that negotiating tradition observed above. Within it, it is worthy to mention that Argentina was the author, individually or collectively, of 20% of the total of documents discussed in the agricultural commission in the period from March, 2000, to November, 2001: about benefits for exports, non-trade legitimate concerns and a general declaration regarding the negotiation process; four proposals with the Cairns group and two joint proposals within the scope of MERCOSUR: one about State trading companies and other referring to disciplines to the credits of exports of agricultural and animal products (one proposed by Brazil, the other by Argentina).

Through these actions, the intention was to undertake a technical diplomacy, based on the bases of the negotiation tradition. By making it possible, through such documents, an interpretation of the effects of each of the measures that were being included in the negotiations, this diplomacy helped to exert a certain influence over other countries, especially the ones in development. That was only possible due to the technical human resources with which it counter, supported in the previously formed tradition; as well as the soft power that this negotiation generated as prestige for the negotiators that pressed forward such documents in the multilateral plans or in the coalitions.

If, at a later stage, the country analysed enriched its participation in the negotiations, with the incorporation of new elements, such as the interest in industrial issues and the participation in other kinds of coalitions (for instance, NAMA-11), we believe that in the moments of greatest crisis, such as the one felt in 2001, when tradition served as a guide for the action, placing the bases for later actions.

In fact, since 2003, as far as the country was recovering itself in its economic and political bases, it increased its management capacity over the foreign agenda, specified

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Peru, Romania, Santa Lucia, Salomon Islands and Trinidad and Tobago). However, in spite of that situation, Argentinian staff had an experience since the Uruguay Round.



its positioning and the participations in the different stages of negotiations became more frequent and intensive. Consequently, with the advancement of the Doha Round, it was possible to observe an increase in the participation in miniministry meetings and green rooms, as well as in the presentation of documents and proposals and in the participation in coalitions. In that, the agricultural issues and the strategic elements identified above were always the central pillar of Argentina at WTO.

## 5. Final thoughts

Thus, it is evident that the 'negotiation tradition' has played a relevant role in the guidance of the actions within foreign trade negotiations. This variable, that has not been profoundly studied, such as others, shows it can come up with plausible explanations about states' conduct regarding foreign policy, as well of its resources of power by considering itself a source of soft power.

In the case of Argentina, the image of the country as 'the world's granary', belonging to the model of liberal development, has been present in each one of the country's participations in the multilateral plan, still guiding diplomatic actions in the Doha Round. The negotiation tradition has, *in crescendo*, strengthened a pattern of actions that identify the country as an active player in the negotiations, with a great technical background, as well as the guidance through agricultural negotiation coalitions. Identity that, in the end, persists in spite of the instabilities the country faces, yet again.

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