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New faces in the green room: Developing country coalitions and decision-making in the WTO

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**New Faces in the Green Room: Developing Country Coalitions
and Decision-Making in the WTO**

Mayur Patel

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Global Trade Governance Project
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Global Economic Governance Programme

Centre for International Studies | Department for Politics and International Relations



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While the rules-based multilateral trading system represents an important part of the international governance framework, concerns have long been expressed about the legitimacy and accountability of the WTO. In 1999, the dramatic breakdown of the Seattle Ministerial placed the marginalisation of developing countries in key deliberations as one of the central political challenges facing the international trade regime. Historically, trade negotiations in the WTO and prior to that the GATT have proceeded through the creation of ‘consensus’ within restricted inner circle group meetings, traditionally dominated by the Quad – the US, Japan, EU and Canada. The lack of transparency and exclusivity of these meetings, combined with the limited resources of weak states, meant that developing countries found themselves isolated from many decision-making processes. In the face of these disparities and institutional pressures, developing countries have now increasingly sought to build coalitions as the primary means of improving their representation in the WTO.

Although coalition bargaining is not new to trade negotiations, what is striking about today's groupings is their unprecedented proliferation and institutionalisation since the creation of the WTO in 1995 and the launch of the Doha Round in 2001 (see Table 1 below). In contrast to the informality of their predecessors in the GATT, many coalitions are now highly visible, formalised and coordinated. Some have also demonstrated their ability to influence the agenda of negotiations, most notably the coalition on TRIPS and Public Health at the Doha Ministerial, November 2001 (Odell and Sell, 2006), and the rise to prominence of the G-20 and G-90 at the Cancun Ministerial, September 2003 (Narlikar and Tussie, 2004). Although the scholarly literature on trade is yet to take up the issue of country groupings in great depth, the proliferation of coalitions has significantly changed the institutional dynamics of the WTO.¹

TABLE 1. The Proliferation of Developing Country Coalitions in the GATT/WTO, 1973-2007.

Timeline	Coalition Formation
(1973-1979) <i>Tokyo Round and pre-Uruguay (before 1986)</i>	ASEAN Group (1973); Informal Group of Developing Countries (1982); Café au Lait Group (1983).
(1986 – 1994) <i>Uruguay Round</i>	Developing Countries on Services (1986); Cairns Group (1986); Air Transport Services (1986); Food Importers’ Group (1986); Latin American Group (1986); MERCUSOR (1991).
(1995 – 2007) <i>WTO established</i>	<i>Pre-Doha Round 1995 – 2001:</i> Like-Minded Group (LMG) (1996); Small Vulnerable Economies (SVEs) (1996); African Group (1997); Caribbean Community (CARICOM) (1997); Friends of Fish (1998); Friends of Geographical Indications (1998); Friends of the Development Box (1999); G-24 on services (1999); Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group (1999); Paradisus Group (2000). <i>Doha Round 2001-2007:</i> African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group (2001); Core Group on Singapore Issues (2001); Recently Acceded Members (RAM) (2003); Cotton-4 (2003); G-10 (2003); Friends of Anti-dumping (2003); G-11 (2005); G-20 (2003); G-33 (2003); G-90 (2003); Core Group on Trade Facilitation (2005); NAMA-11 (2005).

Source: www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/mnist_e/min05_e/brief_e/brief25_e.htm. Accessed 20 April 2007; Narlikar 2003. See Appendix I for an explanation of the coalitions’ agendas and membership.

Coalition building has now emerged as a critical element of the consensus-building process. Whereas under the GATT developing country coalitions were discouraged and seen as a threat to the trading system, member states and the WTO Secretariat have deliberately moved to include coalitions in decision-making processes, recognising their function as representatives of country constituencies. The institutionalised web of coalition building has now become the dominant means of managing the complexity of reaching consensus in multilateral negotiations involving 150 different countries. Although member states have been adapting the means by which they participate in the WTO, insufficient attention has been paid to these shifts and their implications on the governance of the trading system. This under-explored area is particularly significant given the constant references to the WTO as a 'member-driven organisation'.²

Elsewhere in the international relations literature, academics have examined how informal groups have structured access to the IMF executive board (Woods and Lombardi, 2006) and altered the legitimacy of the UN Security Council (Prantl, 2005). However, similar analysis has not yet been done in relation to the WTO. This is partly because the existing trade literature has concentrated on negotiated outcomes and the role that coalitions have in influencing these outcomes (Odell and Sell, 2006; Narlikar and Odell, 2006; Narlikar, 2003). Although this approach has yielded rich empirical work on coalition design and strategy, the interaction between coalition building and the WTO's changing institutional dynamics has been left unaccounted for. Thus, instead of attempting to measure the effectiveness of coalitions in terms of negotiated agreements, I focus my analysis on the relationship between coalitions and WTO decision-making processes.³

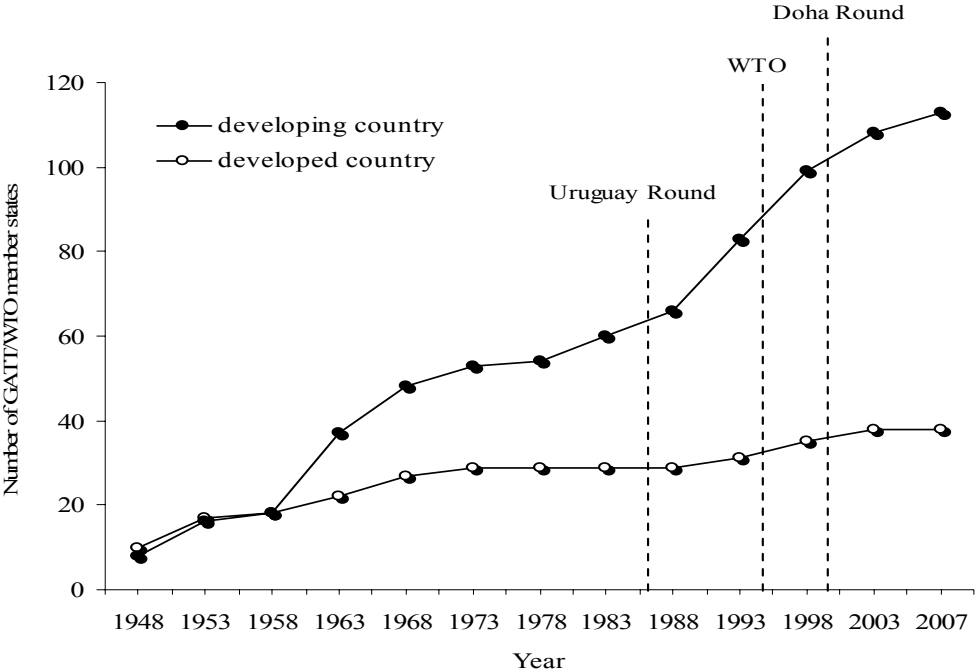
In this article I seek to highlight the importance of developing country coalitions as an integral, and much neglected, part of the governance of the trading system. I argue that the pooling of bargaining resources has improved the technical and lobbying capacity of developing countries. The increasing use of coalitions as platforms for joint-representation has also facilitated greater institutional access to the consensus-building process. Whereas previously only a handful of developing countries were included in closed-consultations on an individual basis, I highlight that coalition-adopted strategies of communication and information dissemination have modified the internal transparency of the green room. Coalition building has certainly improved the participation of developing countries in WTO decision-making, but I also suggest it raises a new set of accountability issues concerning mechanisms of delegation and joint-representation.

The article is divided into five sections. The following section sets out the framework to understand the relationship between coalition building and the shifting processes of WTO decision-making. The second section examines the distinguishing features of current coalition bargaining and why collective action has proliferated since the creation of the WTO. In the third section, I analyse how coalitions structure the participation and representation of developing countries. The fourth section highlights the gradual changes that have occurred in the pattern of consensus-building and examines the role joint-representation has played in influencing these changes. In the final section, I draw attention to the implications these shifting informal processes have on the debate about WTO reform and conclude by emphasising that coalition building warrants greater attention from scholars concerned with issues of legitimacy and accountability in international organisations.

I. Coalition Building and Decision-Making: Understanding the Interaction and its Implications

The WTO’s decision-making process – whereby consensus is created within closed inner circle group meetings and then expanded to the rest of the membership – has been frequently criticised for its lack of transparency and marginalisation of developing countries. While in the early days of the GATT, this restricted form of consensus-building worked to produce outcomes over eight trade rounds, the expanding scope of international trade agreements and the growing desire amongst developing countries to be engaged in WTO negotiations exerted significant pressure on this form of decision-making. As developing country membership increased (see Figure 1 below), the sustained reliance on decision-making processes that excluded member states which now wished to be involved in key deliberations led many to characterise the WTO as illegitimate and unresponsive to the needs of developing countries (Krajewski, 2001; Esty, 2002; Howse, 2001). In particular, member states, NGOs and scholars singled out and criticised the green room process – where a handful of countries negotiate compromises that are later submitted to the membership at large – for its exclusivity and lack of transparency.⁴

FIGURE 1. Growth in Developing Country GATT/WTO Membership, 1948-2000.



Source: www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/gattmem_e.htm. Accessed 20 April 2007

Several proposals have been put forward to reform the WTO and its much-criticised modes of decision-making. Schott and Watal (2000) have argued for the creation of a steering committee of 20 member states that would formalize the green room along the lines of the World Bank and IMF executive boards. Membership of this steering committee would be based on a country’s absolute value of world trade and criterion for geographic representation. Based on similar criteria, Blackhurst and Hartridge (2001, 2004) have suggested that a ‘WTO Consultative Board’ be established to provide direction and recommendations to the membership during negotiations, but without executive powers. The Sutherland Report on the *Future of the WTO* (2005) also proposed that a senior officials’ consultative body be

created of up to 30 member states, as convened by the Director-General to give political guidance to the negotiations.⁵ On various occasions member states too have called for the reform of the WTO, and have stressed the need for greater procedural transparency and inclusiveness in the Geneva process and at Ministerial conferences.⁶

Although this ongoing debate about reform has to date yielded no formal institutional changes, it would be a mistake to believe that international organisations remain static in the absence of official procedural reform. Whilst no proposals for restructuring the WTO have been endorsed, the actual practices of negotiation and consensus-building have gradually shifted.

The most significant shift has been the proliferation of developing country coalitions and their inclusion as joint-representative platforms in WTO decision-making processes. Member states have long been adapting the means by which they participate in the negotiations, but these gradual shifts have been largely neglected in the existing scholarship on WTO governance, which has mainly focused on the institution's increasing openness to external non-state actors.⁷ Nevertheless, the shifts that have occurred in the WTO's internal stakeholder relations demand greater attention, for they have important implications for debates on the governance and accountability of the global trading system.

While the efficacy of international organisations is often judged in terms of their contribution to the public goods of free trade and security, in today's democratic era international organisations also need to be accountable in order to be legitimate (Keohane and Nye, 2003).⁸ Broadly speaking, legitimacy is understood to mean 'that those subject to a governance process accept it as properly authoritative'.⁹ Concerns about the WTO's legitimacy have frequently been expressed in terms of a 'democratic deficit' (see, for example, Howse and Nicolaidis, 2001; Esty, 2002), yet many political scientists now increasingly urge caution in seeking to hold international organisations to implied domestic-models of democracy.¹⁰ As Keohane and Nye (2003) suggest, the appropriate question to ask when analysing international organisations is not how close these organisations come to a domestic model of accountability, but 'how different forms of global governance create potentials for various kinds of accountability'.¹¹ In this vein, this paper discusses the relationship between coalition building and consensus-building in terms of the implications shifting WTO institutional processes have on two conditions identified by scholars as essential to the search for accountability in global governance, that of *transparency* and *participation*.

In this context, transparency is defined in terms of the WTO's 'internal transparency', namely the availability of accessible and timely information to member states, while participation is taken to mean the processes through which member states are enabled to play an active role in decision-making activities.¹² Both of these concepts are considered central dimensions to ensuring credible and legitimate patterns of governance. Florini (2003) notes that transparency is crucial to providing actors with opportunities to enforce rules and to scrutinise deliberation. Similarly, according to participation-led models of accountability, those who are affected by the actions of an organisation must be able to provide input into its decision-making processes (Keohane and Grant, 2005).¹³ Under these conditions, an organisation is more able to respond to the needs of its stakeholders and its member are more able to evaluate its performance.

This focus on transparency and participation is particularly warranted given that member states have also acknowledged the central importance of these principles in the WTO. In

Article 48 of the Doha Declaration, member states affirmed that ‘the negotiations shall be conducted in a transparent manner among participants, in order to facilitate the effective participation of all’.¹⁴ The following section of this article turns to examine the evolution of coalition bargaining and its proliferation since the creation of the WTO.

II. Coalition Building: Proliferation and Institutionalisation

In examining the relationship between coalition bargaining and WTO governance, I adopt Odell’s definition of coalitions as ‘sets of governments that defend a common position in a negotiation by explicit coordination.’¹⁵ Hence, I exclude from my analysis groups of countries that meet to seek compromises but do not attempt to advance a common position,¹⁶ and informal meetings of ministers designed to build consensus – so-called mini-ministerial meetings (Wolfe, 2004a).

Developing country coalitions in the WTO exist in a variety of forms, with different reasons for emerging and different agendas. The existing literature delineates a spectrum of coalition-types ranging from ‘alliance-type’ groups that come together for ‘instrumental reasons’, are directed towards specific threats and dissipate over time, and ‘bloc-type’ groups that employ identity-related methods of formation and are between like-minded states that negotiate across a variety of issue areas (Narlikar 2003). In reality many developing countries draw on both of these methods in designing and constructing their coalitions in negotiations. Some coalitions address broad issue areas, for example, the African Group, the Least-Countries (LDCs) Group, the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group and CARICOM. Others focus on a particular issue-area: the G-20, the G-33, the Cotton-4 and the G-11 coalitions deal exclusively with agriculture, while the NAMA-11 coalition is directed towards the non-agricultural market access negotiations (NAMA). Many coalitions also draw upon their regional similarities as the basis of their formation, including the African Group, the ACP Group, CARICOM, the ASEAN Group and MERCUSOR. Some groupings also exist as ‘cross-over’ coalitions, which include both developing and developed country members, such as the Cairns Group and the G-10. A list of the coalitions involving developing countries that have been active in WTO negotiations is set out in Appendix I.

Coalitions in the WTO also have different internal decision-making structures based on their favoured level of coordination and institutionalisation. Some coalitions, such as the ASEAN Group and MERCUSOR, exist mainly to facilitate exchanges of information between states, whereas others are more formalised and coordinated. This is notably so for the G-20, the G-33, the LDCs Group, the ACP Group, the African Group, the NAMA-11, the Small and Vulnerable Economies (SVEs) Group and the Cairns Group, all of which meet regularly to establish and defend common positions. For the purposes of examining the relationship between coalition building and WTO decision-making, I focus mainly on the latter form of institutionalised collective bargaining.

In the WTO, coalition building takes place at both the ambassadorial and expert level. Generally, ambassadors are responsible for providing political input into the coalition’s positions, while experts are involved in formulating the technical side of proposals and submissions. At WTO Ministerials coalitions have also adopted the custom of hosting daily meetings at ministerial and ambassadorial level. Most coalitions have also established internal hierarchies, whereby one country is assigned to coordinate the group. In some coalitions the co-ordinating post is rotated with regard to a member state’s willingness and capacity to take

on the role, such as in the LDC, ACP and African Groups. In other coalitions, the co-ordinator post is fixed such as is the case of Brazil in the G20, Australia in the Cairns Group, Indonesia in the G33 and South Africa in the NAMA-11.

The Evolution of Coalition Building

Developing country coalition building is not a new feature of the multilateral trade system. The coalitions observed in the WTO today are the result of a process of evolution from previous collective action efforts.¹⁷ During the 1960s and 70s, developing countries focused the majority of their diplomatic efforts in the Group of 77 (G77), which operated in UNCTAD. In the pre-Uruguay phase of the GATT, many also engaged in the bloc-style diplomacy of the Informal Group of Developing Countries (IGDC), institutionalised as the G-10 in 1982.¹⁸ Others participated in the Café au Lait grouping on services led by Colombia and Switzerland.¹⁹ However, since the establishment of the WTO, and in particular the launch of the Doha Round in 2001, coalition building has proliferated and become increasingly institutionalised.

Current developing country coalitions contain many features that make them distinct from their predecessors. First, whereas in the era of the GATT developing country groups worked towards the restructuring of the entire trading system and the creation of a New International Economic Order (NIEO), coalition bargaining in the WTO is more focused on working within the existing trading structure and proactively engaging in negotiations.²⁰ Second, coalition bargaining has become much more formalised; while previous coalitions were largely informal information-based exchanges, many groupings today share technical capacity and develop common negotiating platforms.²¹ Some regionally based coalitions have even established their own secretariat offices in Geneva, including the AU, ACP and Commonwealth Secretariats. Coalitions have also developed the practice of engaging capital-based officials by holding ministerial-level meetings, which serve to harmonise group positions. The extensive network of ministerial-level meetings held by developing country coalitions is illustrated in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2. Coalition Ministerial Meetings during the Doha Round, Nov 2001-April 2007

African Group	
2001, Sept 22-23 Abuja, Nigeria: 4 th OAU/AEC Ministers of Trade	
2003, Jun 19-20 Grand Baie, Mauritius: 1 st Ordinary Session AU Conference of Trade Ministers	
2003, Nov 13-14 Cairo, Egypt: Informal African Ministerial Meeting	
2004, May 27-28 Kigali, Rwanda: 2 nd Ordinary Session AU Conference of Trade Ministers	
2005, June 5-9 Cairo, Egypt: 3 rd Ordinary Session AU Conference of Trade Ministers	
2005, Nov 22-24 Arusha, Tanzania: Extraordinary Session AU Conference of Trade Ministers	
2006, April 12-14 Nairobi, Kenya: 4 th Ordinary Session AU Conference of Trade Ministers	
2007, Jan 15-16 Addis Ababa-Ethiopia: Extraordinary Session AU Conference of Trade Ministers	
ACP Group	
2003, July 31-Aug 1 Brussels, Belgium: ACP Trade Ministers Meeting	
2003, Nov 25-28 Brussels, Belgium: ACP Trade Ministers Meeting & ACP Council of Ministers	
2004, May 4-5 Gaborone, Botswana: ACP Council of Ministers	
2004, July 11, Mauritius: ACP Trade Ministers Meeting	
2004, Oct 25-27 Brussels, Belgium: ACP Trade Ministers Meeting	
2006, Dec 4-6 Khartoum, Sudan: ACP Council of Ministers	
Cairns Group	
2001, Sept 3-5 Punta del Este, Uruguay: 22 nd Ministerial Meeting, Cairns Group	
2002, Oct 18-21 Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia: 24 th Ministerial Meeting Cairns Group	
2004, Feb 23-25 San Jose, Costa Rica: 26 th Ministerial Meeting Cairns Group	
2005, April 1, Cartagena, Columbia: 27 th Ministerial Meeting	
2006, June 28 Geneva, Switzerland: 29 th Ministerial Meeting	
2006, Sept 2-22 Cairns, Australia: 30 th Ministerial Meeting on the 20 year anniversary of the Group	
2007, April 16-18 Lahore, Pakistan: 31 st Ministerial Meeting	
(The Cairns Group's 23 rd , 25 th and 28 th Ministerial Meetings were held during WTO Ministerial Conferences)	
CARICOM	
2003, July 2-5 Montego Bay, Jamaica: 24 th Meeting of Heads of Government	
2003, Sept 3-4 Georgetown, Guyana: Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED)	
2004, July 4-7 St George's, Grenada: 25 th Meeting of Heads of Government	
2005, May 13 Georgetown, Guyana: Trade Ministers Meeting	
2005, Nov 19-20 Christ Church, Barbados: Trade Ministers Meeting	
2005, July 3-6 Gros Islet, Saint Lucia: 26 th Meeting of Heads of Government	
2006, 3-6 July Bird Rock, St. Kitts and Nevis: 27 th Meeting of Heads of Government	
2007, April 12-13 Kingston, Jamaica: Caribbean Trade Ministers Meeting	
LDC Group	
2001, July 22-24 Zanzibar, Tanzania: 1 st LDC Trade Ministers Meeting	
2003, May 31-Jun 02 Dhaka, Bangladesh: 2 nd LDC Trade Ministers Meeting	
2004, May 4-5, Dakar, Senegal: 3 rd LDC Trade Ministers Meeting	
2005, June 25-26 Livingstone, Zambia: 4 th LDC Trade Ministers Meeting	
G-20	G-33
2003, Dec 11-12 Brasilia, Brazil: Ministerial Meeting	2005, June 12 Jakarta, Indonesia: 1 st Ministerial Meeting
2004, June 12 Sao Paulo, Brazil: Ministerial Meeting	2007, Mar 21 Jakarta, Indonesia: 2 nd Ministerial Meeting
2005, Mar 18-19 New Delhi, India: Ministerial Meeting	
2005, Sept 9-10 Bhurban, Pakistan: Ministerial Meeting	G-90
2005, Oct 21 Geneva, Switzerland: Ministerial Meeting	2004, June 3-4, Georgetown, Guyana: Ministerial Meeting
2005, Nov 9 Geneva, Switzerland: Ministerial Meeting	2004, July 12-13, Mauritius: Ministerial Meeting
2006, June 29, Geneva, Switzerland: Ministerial Meeting	2005, Nov 30, Brussels, Belgium: Ministerial Meeting

Source: compiled from *Bridges* news-letter, Third World Network (TWN), coalition and regional secretariat websites (including www.cairnsgroup.org; www.g-20.mre.gov.br; www.crn.org; www.africa-union.org; www.caricom.org; www.crn.org; www.acpsec.org) Note: The table only contains information on Ministerial-level meetings held by the African Group, the ACP Group, the Cairns Group, CARICOM, LDC Group, G-20, G-33 and G-90. The table also does not contain data on the informal and formal ministerial-level meetings that take place between the members of a coalition during WTO Ministerial Conferences.

Third, coalitions now play a more prominent and publicly visible role in the negotiations. Coalitions issue declarations, hold press conferences and engage in media campaigns. Some have gone as far as creating their own websites to increase the public presence of their groupings including the Cairns Group and the G20, while others have created their own logos and forms of branding.²² Fourth, whereas the developing countries in the GATT were largely apprehensive of the role of civil society, more explicit attempts have been made by coalitions to interact with NGOs to develop technical papers and engage in public advocacy campaigns.²³ This was most notably so for the coalition on TRIPS and Public Health (Odell and Sell, 2006) and the Cotton Initiative led by the Cotton-4 (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali) and supported by the African Group.²⁴

Finally, the proliferation of overlapping and simultaneous alliances amongst developing countries has resulted in greater ‘inter-coalition’ cooperation. In a bid to rationalise and systematise collective action on numerous fronts, coalitions have made explicit attempts to ‘reach-out’ to other groupings. This includes informal exchanges of information and the hosting of joint press conferences and bilateral meetings. The most prominent example of this is the alliance of the G110 that emerged during the final stages of the Hong Kong Ministerial, which members have described as a ‘dialogue’ between the G-20, G-33, ACP, LDC, African, CARICOM, Cotton-4, SVEs and NAMA-11.²⁵ More formal attempts have also been made to coordinate positions between coalitions, most notably the mobilisation of the G-90 at the Cancun Ministerial, comprising the African, ACP and LDC Groups. In Hong Kong, members of the G-90 sought to further harmonise their individual coalition positions by submitting joint proposals in the negotiations.²⁶

The evolution in coalition building has not only been restricted to the particular features and agendas of groupings, but also to the sheer number of coalitions in existence. Since the creation of the WTO in 1995, the number of developing country coalitions has increased and so to has the frequency of internal coalition meetings. This proliferation of collective bargaining has been the result of substantial institutional changes in the multilateral trading system. Under the GATT, the lack of universal membership and the focus of discussions on tariff reductions restricted the incentive for developing countries to participate. Additionally, the free-trade ethos of the institution contradicted the preferred policies of state intervention pursued by many countries.²⁷ To the extent that developing countries did engage in trade negotiations, this largely consisted of securing special and differential treatment, and trade preferences from industrialised countries.

However, in 1986 the launch of the Uruguay Round – the most ambitious multilateral trade talks in the GATT – provided the impetus for greater developing country engagement. The expansion of negotiations from tariff reductions to the inclusion of services, trade-related intellectual property (TRIPS), trade-related investment measures (TRIMS) and government procurement motivated many more developing countries to participate. This increased engagement was further cemented by the creation of the WTO in 1995 and the adoption of the ‘single undertaking’, which meant that all of the dominant issues of the GATT and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) were negotiated simultaneously. Whereas previously developing countries were able to opt-out of specific agreements and not required to engage in reciprocal market opening, the ‘single-undertaking’ created binding disciplines that applied to all WTO members. This, coupled with the difficulties many governments had faced in implementing the Uruguay Round agreements, encouraged developing countries to participate further in the agenda setting of future trade rounds.

The changing nature of developing country participation and the increasing desire to negotiate on a collective basis has also been influenced by the particular dynamics of WTO decision-making. In the international relations literature, scholars have long drawn attention to how the rules and norms of institutions create the incentives that shape inter-state behaviour (Kratchowil, 1989; Axelrod and Keohane, 1985). Likewise in the WTO, the informal processes designed to build consensus have also encouraged member states to bargain collectively. Although formally each member state has one vote, as set out in Article IX:1 of the Marrakesh Agreement, virtually all decisions within the WTO are taken by consensus (Steinberg, 2002). Consensus is reached ‘if no member, present at the meeting when the decision is formally taken, formally objects to the proposed decision’. Although this may seem to provide for equal representation amongst all countries, not every member has the same ability to sustain a veto in order to block consensus; in opposing a decision individual member states can find themselves isolated and exposed to pressures, which arguably only the stronger actors in the trading system are able to withstand (Ehlermann and Ehring, 2005).

Additionally, the WTO is largely a member-driven organisation with the WTO Secretariat playing a minimal role in negotiations. The Secretariat consists of little over 600 official staff and has a modest budget of US\$130 million, which makes it one of the smallest among the major international institutions.²⁸ In contrast, the IMF and the World Bank employ over 3,000 and 8,600 staff members respectively.²⁹ In these circumstances, the bulk of the analysis to establish negotiating positions has to be done by member states themselves.³⁰ As a result it is the most powerful countries, with the most technically resourced delegations that remain the best equipped to negotiate deals to their own advantage (Sampson, 2000; Deere, 2004).

In the face of these institutional processes and disparities, collective action provides significant benefits to individual members in the WTO. The pooling of material resources and the aggregation of countries’ market shares allows states to offset their individually limited economic weight. Narlikar (2003) notes that bargaining from a joint platform provides weak countries with greater predictability in dealing with powerful negotiating opponents by partially insulating themselves from external pressure.³¹ The creation of common platforms also allows for joint capacity building as delegations overcome their individual technical and human constraints through the sharing of organisational resources.³² The following section illustrates with empirical evidence how these benefits have altered developing country participation in the WTO.

III. Coalition Bargaining: Enhancing Participation

The capacity of any member state to influence the agenda of the WTO depends on their ability to engage in the processes of decision-making, to be represented in ongoing meetings, to submit proposals and to consistently lobby for these over the course of the negotiations. Developing countries though have been historically marginalised from these decision-making activities given their individual resource constraints and lack of clearly articulated negotiating priorities. This section thus examines the extent to which the proliferation of coalition building has improved the processes by which developing countries bargain, thereby altering their participation and representation in the institution.

The pooling of bargaining resources has importantly allowed developing countries to share the organisational costs of negotiating in the WTO. The majority of developing country delegations are relatively small and ill equipped to monitor, let alone evaluate and influence

the negotiations (Blackhurst et al., 2000; Luke, 2000; Weekes et al., 2001; Deere, 2004). Whereas the Quad members have a team of professional staff tasked with negotiating in Geneva, many developing country missions only have access to one or two diplomats. A comparison of the average number of negotiators in Geneva for a selection of developed and developing countries is provided in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3. Average Number of Delegates in the WTO

Country Grouping	Combined Number of Negotiators	Total Population	Number of citizens (million) per 1 Geneva negotiator
Quad	183	894.8	4.89
OECD	222	1,199.3	5.40
Developing Countries	406	4,123.4	10.1

Source: Deere, C. (2004)

Even these averages do not reveal the full extent of the disparities in negotiating capacity. For example, Japan has twenty Geneva-based delegates, which are often supplemented by experts seconded from capitals for specific issue-area negotiations. In contrast Djibouti, Lesotho, Sierra Leone and Namibia only have one delegate each.³³ Furthermore, many developing country delegates to the WTO do not deal exclusively with trade, but are also responsible for covering other Geneva-based international organisations including UNCTAD, the ILO, WIPO, UNIDO and the UNHCR (Deere, 2004). Coalition bargaining thus serves to economise on the limited human and technical capacity of member states through cooperation in information gathering, policy analysis and participation in WTO committees. This has improved the processes by which weak states engaged in WTO decision-making in two distinct ways: (a) by increasing the technical and research ‘back-up’ support to delegations; and (b) by improving the representation of delegations in WTO committees and informal meetings.

(A) Research and Technical Support

An important part of effective bargaining in the WTO is the capacity of member states to formulate well-researched and coherent negotiating positions. As the multilateral trading system has evolved WTO negotiations have become highly technical, requiring specialised expertise in a range of complex issues from intellectual property agreements to the formulas, bands and coefficients for tariff reductions in agriculture. However, the limited resources available to individual developing countries in Geneva and their lack of domestic institutional capacity mean that many members are restricted in their ability to establish detailed negotiating positions.

Coalition building has thus enabled countries to offset their individual constraints by sharing the tasks of engaging in technical analysis. By pooling resources the responsibility for monitoring and engaging in research is shared amongst the members of a coalition. The importance of this type of analytical support and research expertise is critical to a country’s ability to proactively engage in negotiations and to influence the agenda.³⁴ Similarly, by drawing on relationships established with NGOs and inter-governmental organisations, developing country coalitions have expanded their networks of information and analysis – what Drahos terms their ‘commercial intelligence networks’ – which constitute a major source of bargaining power in trade negotiations.³⁵

Coalitions have also provided a clear structure and focal point through which non-state actors have been able to channel their support to developing countries. In the build up to the Seattle Ministerial both UNCTAD and the UNDP played prominent roles in the emergence of the African Group through supporting and organising regional workshops and assisting in the formulation of an African-specific ‘positive agenda’ for negotiations.³⁶ The Commonwealth Office in Geneva has provided similar support to many of the Caribbean and Pacific island coalitions, including CARICOM and the ACP Group. The analytical and campaign work of NGOs has also assisted the deliberations of coalitions. However, while non-state actors can influence the dominant frame in international negotiations (see, for example, Joachim, 2003; Sell and Prakash, 2004; Odell and Sell, 2006), they should not be viewed solely as a ‘resource’ at the disposal of coalitions. Although beyond the scope of this paper, NGO-led campaigns and even seemingly ‘neutral’ exercises in technical assistance bring with them their own set of ideological and political considerations that compete for the control of coalition agendas and priorities. Nevertheless, the support of these organisations has provided developing countries with an ongoing source of analysis in the negotiations.

(B) Representation

Coalition building has also improved developing country representation in the WTO. The most basic level of participation in negotiations – having representation in Geneva – is still a major difficulty for many countries.³⁷ In 2004, thirty-three developing countries, that were WTO members or in the process of accession, had no permanent representative to the WTO based in Geneva.³⁸ The reasons for the absence of these countries is largely due to the costs of running a trade mission in Geneva, which is estimated at US\$340,000 per year for a 3-4 person delegation.³⁹ This lack of representation matters for developing countries. In a member driven organisation, a state that does not have the capacity to be represented and engaged in meetings is at a great disadvantage in trying to influence a complex process of multilateral negotiations. Thus membership to a coalition that has a presence in Geneva provides countries with a cost effective strategy to monitor and participate in ongoing negotiations by proxy.

Even member states that have permanent missions in Geneva often lack the resources to sufficiently monitor and be present in the wide range of trade negotiations that occur simultaneously. The formation of the WTO and in particular the launch of the Doha Round marked a profusion of new items onto the trade agenda. There now exist negotiations in over 20 areas, with the work of the WTO involving over 60 committees, special negotiating sessions and working groups.⁴⁰ In 2001 alone there were almost 400 formal and 500 informal meetings.⁴¹ As a result, it is commonplace to find one developing country delegate charged with handling several complex issue-areas, such as services, non-agricultural market access (NAMA), agriculture and trade-related intellectual property (TRIPS). Coalition building has thus enabled developing country interests to be better covered in the WTO through the sharing of labour costs involved in negotiating. Many coalitions, including the African, ACP and LDC Groups, have formalized the practice of delegating certain member states to act as ‘focal points’ to lead the group in specific issue-area negotiations. This has meant that at least one country mission is charged with representing the coalition’s position in the negotiating committees and working groups on each of the major WTO issues.

These changes in developing country engagement have been particularly important at WTO Ministerial Conferences, where the numerous meetings that occur in parallel would otherwise be an insurmountable obstacle to countries negotiating on an individual basis. At the Hong

Kong Ministerial the EU boasted a delegation of some 598 individuals (including some 78 delegates from the European Commission) and the US over 360 delegates; while at the other end of the scale developing countries such as Burundi, Grenada, Guinea Bissau, the Gambia and Djibouti each had less than four representatives.⁴² Due to these constraints, collective bargaining has helped individual countries monitor negotiations and have their positions better articulated in multiple fora.

IV. Coalition Building: Changing Patterns of Consensus

As developing country coalitions have become more organised, the informal pattern of consensus-building in the WTO has also gradually changed. This section highlights the shifts that have occurred in WTO governance, with particular reference made to the way coalition strategies have modified the internal transparency of the negotiations.

Previously, under the 'club-like' system of the GATT, developing countries were largely excluded from the green room process. During the Tokyo Round (1973-1979) these meetings generally involved less than eight countries and were dominated by the Quad members. After the launch of the Uruguay Round in 1986, the green room deliberations evolved to include typically the Quad, Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, Norway, a few transition economies and a handful of developing countries, such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Egypt, Hong Kong, India, South Korea, Mexico, Pakistan, South Africa and at least one ASEAN country (Schott and Watal, 2000).⁴³

After the creation of the WTO in 1995, gradually more developing countries were included in decision-making processes. At the first WTO Ministerial Conference in Singapore, 9-13 December 1996, the inner circle consultations involved 34 of the WTO's 128 member states.⁴⁴ At the following Ministerial in Seattle, 30 November - 3 December 1999, restricted meetings containing the Quad and only a select group of countries were convened by the Chair of the Conference, USTR Charlene Barshefsky, in an attempt to salvage a ministerial declaration. The exclusion of most developing countries from the green room and the uniquely ill-managed nature of the conference, led many country officials to publicly voice their frustrations about being marginalised in the Ministerial process.⁴⁵

Following the dramatic collapse of the Seattle Ministerial and the public criticisms of the exclusion of developing countries, small changes were registered in WTO decision-making. Various chairmen and insiders of the green room placed greater emphasis on opening access to key negotiating groups.⁴⁶ Even in these slightly enlarged deliberations, the handful of developing countries that were included in green rooms were invited only in their individual capacity, rather than as representatives of wider groupings. More recently, it has become customary for some developing countries to be included in inner circle negotiations in their *ex officio* capacity as co-ordinators of coalitions.⁴⁷

This shift to explicitly include coalitions in WTO decision-making began with preparations for the Doha Ministerial in 2001, and has since become further institutionalised. At the negotiations to launch the Doha Round, 9-14 November 2001, fourteen of the twenty-three member states invited to participate in critical inner circle meetings were developing countries, including Brazil, Botswana, Chile, Egypt, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Tanzania, Uruguay and Zimbabwe.⁴⁸ Crucially, unlike at previous Ministerials many countries were explicitly

involved in discussions as the co-ordinators of coalitions, including Kenya as the co-ordinator of the ACP Group and Tanzania as co-ordinator of the LDC Group.

The recent Hong Kong Ministerial, 13-18 December 2005, further cemented this process of incorporating developing country coalitions in WTO decision-making. At the Ministerial, the green room process, re-labelled the Chairman's Consultative Group (CCG), functioned as a 'pseudo-parliamentary' system with different country constituencies represented through their co-ordinators.⁴⁹ In this manner, the African Group (represented by Egypt), the ACP/G-90 (represented by Mauritius), the LDCs (represented by Zambia), the G-20 (represented by Brazil) and the G-33 (represented by Indonesia) were all active participants in the deliberations.⁵⁰ Given this trend, developing country coalitions have now emerged as an integral part of the consensus-building process in the WTO.

Understanding Institutional Change

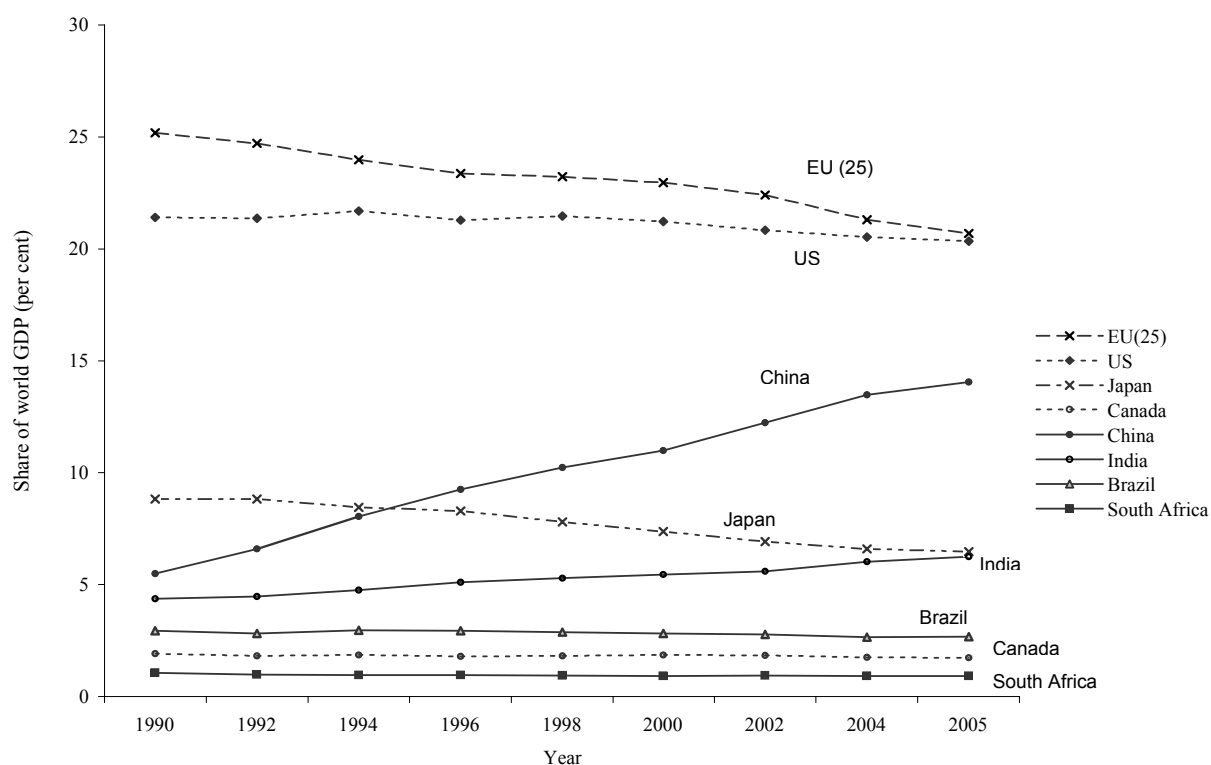
What accounts for these gradual changes in WTO decision-making? The relationship highlighted above between the evolving dynamics of the WTO and the proliferation of developing country groupings provokes us to explore whether the process of coalition bargaining has influenced the re-shaping of GATT/WTO governance.

The scholarship on international relations has largely understood the design of international organisations as 'reflecting the institutionalization of the distribution of their member states' relative influence and power over governance at a certain point of time'.⁵¹ The process of institutional change is essentially perceived as a reflection of structural shifts in the world economy. As applied to the WTO, one interpretation of this is that increases in developing country membership and the economic growth of emerging markets have altered the balance of material power in the trading system, thereby explaining the observed shifts in governance.

Certainly, developing country membership of the GATT/WTO has increased. At the start of the Uruguay Round in 1986 only 63 developing countries were members of the GATT, while at the time of the launch of the Doha Round in 2001, 106 of the 144 WTO member states were developing countries. However, if one looks at the changing material bargaining power of developing countries the data only lends qualified support to the view that structural factors *alone* account for the process of institutional change.

The relative material bargaining power of countries in the WTO can be examined by looking at their market share in the world economy. A proxy of this is provided in Figure 2 below, which illustrates the changing patterns of country shares of world GDP from 1990-2005. The figure presents information on the Quad members and major developing countries.

FIGURE 2. Changing Patterns of World Market Share, 1990-2005.



Source: World Bank Development Indicators, September 2006 edition.

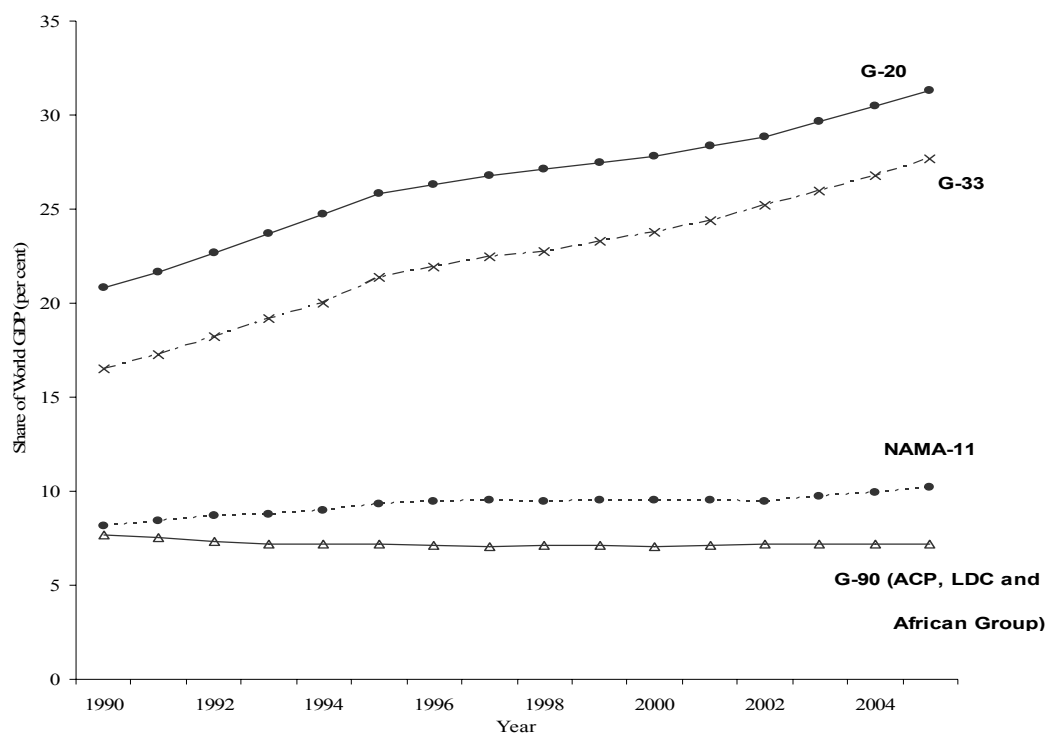
Notes: Share of world GDP, based on national GDP converted to international \$ using PPP rates.

Over the past 15 years, the market shares of the US and Canada have remained constant at approximately 21% and 2% of world GDP, while the shares of the EU (25) and Japan have slightly declined. Of the major developing countries, China has grown dramatically from under 6% of world GDP in 1990 to over 14% in 2005. To a lesser extent India has also captured greater market share from 4% to 6% of world GDP, while for Brazil and South Africa there has been little change.

Beyond current market shares, it is possible to argue that relative structural weight in international institutions is also based on expectations of a country's future material power. This may be particularly relevant to the WTO given that the current trade-offs member states make in negotiations create the rules that affect future patterns of trade. Looking to the future, the Goldman Sachs (2003) *Dreaming with BRICS* report projects that India's economy will be larger than Japan's by 2032, Brazil's larger than the UK by 2026, and China's larger than the US by 2041.

Based on current and expected market shares it is plausible that for coalitions, which count major emerging markets among their members, their group's growing material power partly explains their increased inclusion in WTO decision-making. As Figure 3 illustrates below, there has been significant growth in the market shares of the G-20 and G-33 coalitions largely due to China's expansion. However, there has been little change in the material power of other developing country groups. Notably the market shares of the African, ACP and LDC Groups have remained unchanged over the past 15 years. In spite of this stagnation, these coalitions have also secured greater institutional access and are consistently included in green room discussions.

FIGURE 3. Developing Country Coalition Market Shares, 1990-2005.



Source: World Bank Development Indicators, September 2006 edition.

Notes: The data for coalition market shares is calculated on the basis of coalition membership as of December 2006.

This evidence suggests that the shifts in consensus-building may also be partly explained by the process of coalition bargaining, rather than structural factors alone. Here if one looks at the internal dynamics of coalitions, many groupings have adopted strategies of delegation and communication that have altered informal patterns of WTO governance. To take advantage of having representation in the green room, coalitions now host internal meetings where co-ordinators debrief their members on the discussions that occur within ‘closed-consultations’. This information dissemination has allowed weak states to identify trade-offs and to contribute to consensus-building. It has also improved the internal transparency of the negotiations, particularly given that records of informal meetings are not kept, and hence, unlike official meetings, they cannot be followed without an actual presence in the discussions or an established line of communication.

Indeed, developing country constituencies have the ability to determine the particular form of their engagement in these informal processes and to elect the co-ordinating delegation to represent their interests. The fact that coalition co-ordinators are generally present in inner circle consultations, regardless of the particular member state that occupies the post, means that coalition building has played some role in modifying the patterns of WTO governance.

The incremental changes observed in WTO decision-making are also due to a set of ‘pull’ factors. Member states and the WTO Secretariat now deliberately incorporate developing country coalitions in key decision-making activities to manage the complexity of multilateral negotiations. As Wolfe (2005) notes, the Secretariat has become more sophisticated in ensuring various coalition representatives are invited to attend green room meetings.⁵² This practice, which is largely seen as beginning in earnest when Mike Moore was WTO Director-General, has become further institutionalised under Pascal Lamy.⁵³ The Secretariat now

provides technical and financial assistance to support various coalition building efforts. This includes secretarial support to the African and LDC Groups through the WTO Development Division, and a regional co-ordinator internship programme that provides funds to increase the human resources available to member states acting as coalition co-ordinators.⁵⁴ Indeed, reaching out to coalitions has become the favoured means by which to build consensus, bolster the legitimacy of outcomes and satisfy the desires of developing countries to be included in discussions.

Although in examining institutional change, our ability to specifically attribute cause and effect is hampered by the difficulties in disaggregating structural and process forces,⁵⁵ developing countries have placed greater pressure on patterns of WTO governance by forming their own group structures of interaction (Drahos, 2005). There is no doubt that by building coalitions developing countries have secured greater ‘virtual access’ to previously exclusive and restricted patterns of decision-making. However, this form of representation also raises a new and important set of challenges – most notably in terms of accountability and the internal dynamics of coalitions – that warrant greater consideration.

Joint-Representation: Principals and Agents

Historically, the divergent interests of members have tended to undermine the coherence and stability of developing country groupings. As Jones (2005) notes, even where there is strong common interest, this may not be enough on its own to secure joint representation.⁵⁶ In a system where one country bargains on behalf of a group, the critical question is whether states are able to regulate the behaviour of their co-ordinator to prevent the possibility of deviation or defection from a group’s mandate.

Here the perspective of principal-agent theory is useful in directing our attention to the authority members of a coalition (‘the principals’) retain when they delegate tasks to a co-ordinator (‘the agent’), and their ability to use incentives to reward or sanction that agent.⁵⁷ In line with delegation-led models of accountability put forward by Keohane and Grant (2005), agency theory also opens up the space to interrogate the internal accountability of coalitions and notions of ‘horizontal-accountability’ in relations between member states. This under explored area in the governance literature on trade is particularly significant given the constant references to the WTO as a ‘member-driven organisation’.

In systems of joint-representation the most direct form of accountability is the process whereby representatives can be replaced through election. In coalitions where the co-ordinating post is assigned on a rotational basis, members can sanction their leaders by relieving them of their positions. However, in coalitions where the co-ordinating post is fixed this form of electoral accountability is less readily available. Aside from this, countries may be able to monitor their co-ordinator’s behaviour when other members of the same coalition are also present in the green room, either in their individual capacity or as ‘Friends of the Chair’. For example, while the co-ordinators for the African Group (Egypt) and the ACP Group (Mauritius) were present in green room meetings at the Hong Kong Ministerial, Kenya, a member of both coalitions, was also a participant in the closed-consultations due to Minister Kituyi’s position as the Facilitator on agriculture.⁵⁸ Through these ‘peer mechanisms’ of accountability, coalition members may be able to deter their co-ordinator from deviating from the group’s mandate in closed-discussions.⁵⁹

Nevertheless, in both types of coalitions the co-ordinating delegation (whether fixed or not) often provides the technical expertise and political authority that many members depend upon. While sharing of resources can be beneficial, it also increases the possibility that members may be reluctant to challenge the authority of their co-ordinators. This dilemma raises issues about the trade-offs states accept within joint-representation arrangements, whereby their 'nationally-determined' positions are set aside in order to agree to elements of a 'common platform'.

The problem of defection from a coalition platform also remains particularly acute for developing countries due to their dependence on donor aid and preferential trade agreements, which makes them structurally weak and susceptible to offers of side-payments by outsiders seeking to break a coalition.⁶⁰ The existence of these external inducements and pressures limits the reliability of a system of 'virtual participation' that entrusts access to the decision-making process to a bargaining agent.

V. Global Governance and Institutional Reform

In the final part of this article I turn to examine the implications the proliferation of developing country coalitions has on WTO governance. While the rise of coalitions may well have improved the 'virtual participation' and lobbying capacity of many weak states in negotiations, to what extent does the inclusion of developing country groupings in consensus-building alleviate criticisms about transparency and participation in the WTO?

Some commentators regard the increased opening of decision-making activities as a welcome shift towards the inclusion of developing countries on an equal footing in the negotiations. As the South African Trade Minister, Alec Erwin, announced at the Cancun Ministerial: 'this is the first time we have experienced a situation where by combining our technical expertise, we can sit as equals at the table...this is a change in the quality of negotiations between developed and developing countries.'⁶¹ Yet, more sceptical analysts contend that the extension of representation in green room meetings is merely an attempt to use a 'handpicked group of developing countries' to give the semblance of institutional legitimacy.⁶² The truth lies somewhere in the middle.

The proliferation of coalition representation in the green room has improved some aspects of the internal transparency of WTO decision-making, but far from all. Indeed, since the conclusion of the July Package in 2004 much of the focus of consensus-building has shifted to small group discussions between the G-6 (EU, US, Japan, Australia, India and Brazil) and the G-4 (EU, US, India and Brazil), excluding the vast majority of developing countries and their coalitions.⁶³ These developments seem to affirm Blackhurst and Hartridge's (2004) earlier claims that the key challenge for WTO decision-making will continue to centre on an 'insider-outsider' divide, rather than a 'North-South' divide, whereby only a handful of developed and major developing countries are included in key deliberations.

How robust then are these informal shifts in consensus-building processes – in particular the rise of developing country coalitions – and do they compensate for the lack of formal WTO reform? In his examination of the governance of the UN Security Council, Prantl identifies the emergence of informal country groupings as 'flexible agents of incremental change' that have acted as 'a safety valve to divert the inner-institutional pressure for Council reform'.⁶⁴ In

the context of the WTO, has coalition building similarly become a ‘safety valve’, alleviating demands for the redesigning of the WTO’s function as a forum for negotiations?

Member states and the Secretariat have certainly tried to use coalitions as the means by which to manage the pressures of the concentric-circle model of decision-making, while ensuring that all members feel sufficiently represented. Coalition-based representation does indeed have significant merit and may well be a far more workable adaptation than grappling with proposals for the formal restructuring of the green room.⁶⁵ The way in which coalitions are included in the consensus-building process allows for flexibility – members remain free to shape the features of their coalitions and alliances are able to change in response to shifts in the negotiations. By contrast, attempts to introduce formal country groups, such as exist in the IMF, run the risk of reducing this responsiveness.

Although, the existing WTO coalitions are largely tactical alliances that have emerged in response to the current Doha trade agenda, the process of coalition building is not necessarily immutable or inimitable. Various permutations are possible: regional-based coalitions may become more unified as integration strengthens; bloc coalitions may dissipate as the bargain moves from establishing the framework of negotiations to determining the specific modalities of agreements; and new issue-specific groups may emerge as the trade agenda shifts its focus. Therefore, while the specific features of groupings may change, there is no reason to assume that coalitions will cease as the way to structure developing country participation in the WTO.

Thus, the continued viability of attempts to draw on coalitions to manage the complexity of multilateral negotiations will rest on the durability of processes within coalitions and whether developing countries continue to perceive sufficient returns on their efforts to devise and defend common positions. If the inclusion of developing country coalitions serves to permanently enlarge the ownership of WTO decision-making processes, the observed shifts in the governance of the institution may be enduring. This, in turn, has the possibility to increase the long-term effectiveness of the global trade regime. As Franck (1988) notes, where decision-making processes are underpinned by a belief in their procedural fairness, this can induce greater levels of compliance and adherence to institutional norms and rules. There is, as Elsig (2007) concludes, an underlying interconnection in the governance of intergovernmental organisations between ‘input legitimacy’ (the process of how decisions are made) and ‘output legitimacy’ (the substantive outcomes of a course of action), which demands greater recognition by scholars and practitioners alike. Hence, innovations in consensus-building, which consciously include developing countries and their coalitions in a transparent and predictable way, may well serve to reinforce the implementation of agreements and strengthen the rules-based trading system.

Conclusion

This article has highlighted that the proliferation of coalition building has been a significant development in the governance of the WTO. In order to understand debates about institutional reform and accountability it is critical that greater attention be placed on the means by which developing countries participate in the informal processes of the organisation and the gradual changes that are occurring in patterns of decision-making.

In this paper I have extended the work on coalition bargaining and on the legitimacy of the WTO. While the existing literature on bargaining coalitions has focused on tracing their

impact on negotiated outcomes, I have emphasised that coalitions are changing institutional decision-making processes at a systemic level. Similarly, while the current scholarship on the legitimacy of the WTO has concentrated on the shifts in the access of external non-state actors, I have drawn attention to the gradual changes that have taken place regarding internal member state relations.

Coalition building has now emerged as a key element of consensus-building. Although collective action is not new, country groupings have proliferated since the establishment of the WTO in 1995. As coalitions have become more institutionalised, I have argued this has improved the technical and lobbying capacity of weak states. Member states and the Secretariat have also deliberately included developing country coalitions in key decision-making activities as a way to manage the pressure to build consensus amongst 151 countries, while ensuring all feel represented.

In outlining these changes in the patterns of institutional governance I have suggested that the shifting material bargaining power associated with an expanding membership base and the growth of emerging markets, while significant, does not on its own account for the changing pattern of consensus-building. The proliferation of coalitions has modified decision-making through strategies of communication and information dissemination. This has resulted in some improvements in transparency and participation in the WTO given that member states, which were previously disenfranchised from the institution, are now included in agenda setting and rule-making activities by means of collective bargaining. However, this form of representation also raises a new set of accountability challenges concerning the internal dynamics of coalitions and mechanisms of delegation in member state relations.

The empirical evidence presented here suggests that what we are witnessing is a new form of coalition networks embedded in international institutions, which are altering the face of governance not only in the IMF and the UN, but also in the WTO. These shifts will require a greater understanding of both the capacity and limits of informal collective action to structure participation and facilitate cooperation in international institutions. While coalition building may partly alleviate some of the criticisms traditionally directed at WTO negotiations, collective action has less of a role to play in other parts of the institution where developing countries still have to engage on an individual basis, such as the implementation of agreements and the increasing judicialisation of the WTO.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, greater access to decision-making processes is a vital first step to increasing the potential of all member states to influence the outcomes of future trade agreements.

The conclusions of this article add to the call that further research needs to be done on the dynamics between the informal processes and the formal structures of international organisations.⁶⁷ Issues of governance, accountability and legitimacy demand deeper exploration of the ways in which formal governing bodies shape, interact and adapt to changing informal group processes. In the literature on the global trading system, future work needs to address the relationships that exist between member states and between the Secretariat and member states. Only through a detailed examination of this can we hope to better understand proposals for reform and ongoing attempts to affect institutional change from within.

APPENDIX I: Developing Country Coalitions Active in the WTO

Coalition	Membership (as of December 2006)	Description
African Group* (preparations for Seattle 1998)	Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and 7 observers.	The Group formed out of a decision taken by the Organisation of African Union (OAU) and the African Economic Community (AEC) in 1998. The coalition negotiates across all issues. The coalition played an active role in the securing of the TRIPS and Public Health declaration, in the opposition to the Singapore Issues in Cancun, and in securing the waiver of the Cotonou Agreement. In Hong Kong the coalition also worked to support the efforts of the Cotton 4. The group operates often in tandem with both the ACP and the LDC Group.
ACP Group* (preparations for Doha, 2001)	The African Group members (minus Egypt, Morocco, South Africa and Tunisia), plus Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Solomon Islands, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, and 9 observers.	The Group coordinates with the African Group. The central focus of the coalition was on securing the waiver for the Cotonou Agreement, signed on 23 June 2000. This was achieved at Doha. The coalition also negotiates on a platform that seeks to defend against the erosion of preferential agreements, which many members of the group have with the EU.
ASEAN (1973)	Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. (Lao and Vietnam were negotiating WTO membership as of December 2006. Vietnam subsequently became a WTO member on 11 Jan 2007)	ASEAN Geneva Committee was constituted in 1973, and was especially active during the Uruguay Round. In the WTO, the group has delegated and coordinated issues within its membership, but has been limited to the exchange of information rather than the submission of joint proposals.
Cairns Group* (1986, Uruguay Round)	Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, and Uruguay. (Fiji was previously a member of the coalition)	In the WTO the group has lobbied for greater liberalisation of agriculture, with respect to the elimination of export subsidies, substantial improvement in market access and the elimination of trade and production distorting forms of support. The Cairns Group has pushed the most ambitious agenda on agriculture, which has seen it place increasing pressure on both the EU and the US to reform their farming practices.
CARICOM (1997)	Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname	The group has been active since 1997 with the establishment of the CARICOM Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM). The Group negotiates across the range of WTO issue areas, with particular reference to the need for special and differential treatment in the agricultural negotiations for small economies.
Core Group on Singapore Issues (2001)	Bangladesh, Cuba, Egypt, Kenya, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe.	The group emerged in opposition to the treatment of the four Singapore issues as a single basket.
Core Group On Trade Facilitation (2005)	Bangladesh, Botswana, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jamaica (as the ACP focal point), Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Morocco (as African Group focal point), Namibia, Nepal (as LDC focal point), Nigeria, the Philippines, Rwanda, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe.	The group has focused on the provision of technical assistance and special differential treatment, and the need to assess the implementation costs and support capacity building in the trade facilitation negotiations.
Cotton-4* (preparations for Cancun, 2003)	Mali, Benin, Chad and Burkina Faso	The coalition emerged to demand the complete phase-out of subsidies on cotton and the implementation of a financial compensatory mechanism, until the subsidies were phased out. The coalition worked in conjunction with the African Group. In Hong Kong, the group secured the elimination of export subsidies on cotton by 2006, and a commitment to eliminate domestic subsidies earlier than the rest of the agricultural negotiations.
Friends of Fish (preparations for Seattle 1998)	Australia, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Philippines and US.	The alliance emerged in the preparatory phase of Seattle in 1999. The coalition has proposed the elimination of subsidies that contribute to fisheries overcapacity. In Doha the group achieved recognition of the need to work to improve disciplines on fisheries.
Friends of	Dominican Republic, Egypt, Honduras, India,	The group emerged in Seattle in proposition of the view

Coalition	Membership (as of December 2006)	Description
Geographical Indications (Seattle 1998)	Jamaica, Kenya, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand.	that geographical indications be extended to additional products besides wines and spirits, in TRIPS regulation. The group has had relatively limited achievements.
Friends of the Development Box (preparations for Seattle, 1999)	Cuba, Dominican Republic, Honduras, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Zimbabwe.	The group began in the preparatory process for Seattle in 1999 and has attempted to draw attention to the need of Special and Differential Treatment for developing countries and LDCs in agricultural negotiations. Though unable to secure the adoption of a 'development box', the Doha Declaration does acknowledge the need for Special and Differential Treatment.
Friends of Anti-Dumping Negotiations (2003)	Brazil, Chile, Israel, Japan, Korea, Norway, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei, Thailand and Hong Kong, China	The group seeks to tighten rules on the application of anti-dumping measures, including the mitigating of 'excessive effects' of antidumping measures, preventing such measures becoming permanent, strengthening the due process and transparency of dumping proceedings and reducing the costs of anti-dumping cases.
G-10* (2003)	Iceland, Israel, Japan, Republic of Korea, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Norway, Switzerland and Chinese Taipei. (Bulgaria was previously a member)	The group supports the 'multifunctionality' of agriculture (i.e. the multiple roles agriculture plays, including the maintenance of cultural heritage, the conservation of land, the preservation of the natural environment etc.) and the need for high levels of domestic support and protection.
G-11* (2005)	Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Venezuela.	The group supports the full liberalisation of agricultural tropical products.
G20* (Cancun, 2003)	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zimbabwe (Colombia, Costa Rica and El Salvador were previously members of the G-20 and original signatories to the coalition's proposals in Cancun).	The G-20 seeks the elimination of export subsidies and domestic support and the liberalisation of market access in agriculture.
G-33* (preparations for Cancun, 2003)	Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Korea, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe.	Emerged in favour of including provisions on Special Products (SP) and Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) in a revised agreement on agriculture. The group seeks to make operational and effective special and differential treatment provisions by allowing developing countries to protect certain products from liberalisation on the basis of food security, sustainable livelihoods and rural development needs.
G90* (emerged in Cancun, 2003)	Alliance of the African, LDCs, and ACP Group.	The alliance of the three coalitions emerged in Cancun in opposition to the Singapore Issues re-emerging on the agenda in Cancun. The group also was remobilised in Hong Kong, in order to harmonise the positions of the three groupings. Part of the impetus of forming the G90 has been the technical difficulties of spreading a small delegation across three sets of coalitions, and also the attempt to gain greater leverage in the negotiations.
G-24 on Services (1999)	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uruguay and Venezuela.	Formed to address the Guidelines and Negotiating Procedures on Services Negotiations.
LDC Group* (1999)	Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Djibouti, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Tanzania, Togo,	The Group has focused on issues including the need for technical assistance and capacity building, the problems of accession, representation and research for LDCs, More recently, the group has focused on negotiating the five agreement specific LDC proposals on Special and Differential Treatment. In Hong Kong, the group worked

Coalition	Membership (as of December 2006)	Description
	Uganda and Zambia.	to secure Duty Free and Quota Free Market Access to developed country markets.
Like Minded Group (LMG) (1996)	Cuba, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe, with Jamaica and Mauritius as observers	Initially formed in opposition to the 'Singapore Issues' but then evolved to focus on implementation issues, development issues and systemic reform.
MERCUSOR (formed 1991)	Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay.	Joint-proposals submitted in the build-up to the Seattle Ministerial. Cooperation largely focused on agricultural negotiations.
NAMA-11* (preparations for Hong Kong, 2005)	Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Namibia, Philippines, South Africa, Tunisia and Venezuela.	The group led by South Africa supports the maintenance of developing country flexibilities with regard to the application of the formula for NAMA tariff reductions, while curbing tariff peaks and escalation in developed countries.
Paradisus Group (2001)	Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.	Formed in the run-up to Doha, and focused on procedural issues of WTO institutional reform. The Group was not sustained after the launch of the Doha Round.
RAMs (2003)	Albania, Armenia, China, Croatia, Ecuador, FYR Macedonia, Jordan, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Mongolia, Oman, Panama, Saudi Arabia and Chinese Taipei.	The group has worked to ensure the differential treatment of recently-acceded-members (RAMS) within the Doha Round due to the extensive levels of commitments these countries made in the process of accession to the WTO.
SVEs* (preparations for Singapore, 1996)	Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Fiji, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Maldives, Mauritius, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, St. Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago.	The group has focused on the underlying assumption that small vulnerable economies (SVEs) face problems that are unique and ought to be recognised in trade negotiations. In particular the group has attempted to secure preferential treatment and technical assistance for their economies.

Source: compiled from WTO documents and materials (available www.wto.org), Bridges Newsletter, Narlikar (2003), Narlikar and Tussie (2004). Notes: The appendix only includes coalitions involving developing countries that have been active in WTO. It also does not include groups of countries that have emerged to exchange information and build consensus, but do not attempt to advance a common position in negotiations, such as the Five-Interested Parties (FIPS), FIPS-plus, G-4, G-6, non-G6 and G-110. Coalitions marked with an asterisks (*) were active at the most recent WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong, 13-18 December 2005.

¹ For studies on coalitions in the GATT see, for example, Hamilton and Whalley, 1989; Kahler and Odell, 1989; Higgot and Cooper, 1990; Tussie and Glover, 1995; Narlikar, 2003. A few authors have also begun to analyse the impact of coalitions in the WTO, notably Narlikar, 2003; Narlikar and Tussie, 2004; Odell (eds) 2006.

² See, for example, Sutherland et al., 2005;

³ I draw on Schott and Watal's (2002) definition of decision-making as 'process by which member governments resolve issues concerning the conduct of trade negotiations and the management of the trading system'. p. 283

⁴ See, for example, Third World Network, 1999; Public Citizen, 1999; Oxfam et al., 2001.

⁵ Sutherland, Peter et al (2005) The consultative body would be chaired by the Director-General and consist of a mix of permanent seats for the major trading powers and rotating seats drawing for instance on geographical areas, regional trading agreements or mix constituencies like in the IMF and World Bank executive boards.

⁶ WTO (2002) WT/GC/W/471, 24 April 2004; WTO (2003) WT/GC/W/510, 14 August 2003.

⁷ See, for example, Esty, 1998; Marceau and Pedersen, 1999; Charnovitz, 2000; Lacarte, 2004; Smythe and Smith, 2006. There are a few notable exceptions which have examined changing internal stakeholder relations in the WTO, for example, Pedersen, 2006; Wolfe's, 2004a, study of mini-ministerial meetings; and Odell's, 2005, examination of the role of the chairperson in WTO negotiations.

⁸ Keohane and Nye, 2003, p. 386

⁹ Keohane and Nye, 2003, p. 386. In the governance literature a distinction is often made between 'output legitimacy' – the substantive outcomes of a course of action – and 'input legitimacy' – the process of how decisions are made, see for example Franck, 1988. This article focuses only on the latter in relation to coalition building and WTO negotiations.

¹⁰ See, for example, Dahl, 1999, and Moravcsik, 2004.

¹¹ Keohane and Nye, 2003, p. 388. See also Keohane and Grant, 2005, pp. 33-34

¹² Blagescu and Lloyd, 2006, pp. 12-14.

¹³ Keohane and Grant, 2005, p.31

¹⁴ WTO (2001) WTO/MIN(01)/DEC/1, 14 November 2001.

¹⁵ Odell, 2006, p.13.

¹⁶ These groups include the Five-Interested Parties (FIPS), FIPS-plus, G-4, G-6, non-G6 and G-110. The Five-Interested Parties (FIPS) include Australia, Brazil, EU, India and the US. FIPS-plus includes the FIPS countries plus Argentina, Canada, China, Japan, New Zealand and Switzerland. The G-4 consists of Brazil, EU, India and the US. The G-6 consists of Australia, Brazil, EU, India, the US and Japan (see Wolfe 2006 for discussion of the position of these groups). The non-G6 includes Canada, Chile, Indonesia, Kenya, New Zealand and Norway. The G-110 is an informal alliance between the G-20, G-33, ACP, LDC, African, CARICOM, Cotton-4, Small Vulnerable Economies (SVEs) and NAMA-11 (see Appendix I).

¹⁷ See for example Narlikar and Tussie, 2004.

¹⁸ Narlikar, 2003, p. 45

¹⁹ The Café au Lait group comprised of developing countries (Bangladesh, Chile, Colombia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Ivory coast, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Philippines, Romania, Singapore, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Thailand, Turkey, Uruguay, Zambia, and Zaire) and their liaison with the G-9 developed countries (Australia, Austria, Canada, Finland, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland). For a detailed examination of the Café au Lait group see Narlikar, 2003.

²⁰ Hurrell and Narlikar, 2006, term this the move towards 'insider activism'.

²¹ Indeed, many delegates at the Hong Kong Ministerial noted that even in comparison to the previous Ministerial in Cancun, developing countries had been more organised and deliberate in hosting coalition meetings at ministerial and technical levels on a daily basis throughout the conference. Interviews with delegates Hong Kong.

²² G20 website www.g-20.mre.gov.br, Cairns Group website www.cairnsgroup.org. For example, the G33 coalition launched their group's logo at the WTO Sixth Ministerial in Hong Kong, December 2005. The G33 logo includes the 33 written in hearts, and a grain of wheat designed to represent both their cohesion and their position on agriculture.

²³ Narlikar, 2005; Hurrell and Narlikar, 2006.

²⁴ Patel, 2006.

²⁵ Interviews with trade delegates, 13-18 December 2005, Hong Kong.

²⁶ Interviews with trade delegates, 13-18 December 2005, Hong Kong.

²⁷ Narlikar, 2003, p. 35

²⁸ See Sutherland et al., 2005

²⁹ See World Bank 2006; IMF 2006. In contrast to the WTO, the IMF's annual administrative budget is nearly US\$937million, IMF, 2006, p.115

³⁰ Narlikar, 2003, p. 14

³¹ Narlikar, 2003, p. 15

³² *ibid*

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- ³³ WTO, 2005.
- ³⁴ See, for example, Higgot and Cooper, 1990; Narlikar and Tussie, 2004.
- ³⁵ Drahos, 2003, pp. 82-83. While Drahos' use of the term 'commercial intelligence networks' is limited to 'state's trade bureaucracy, its business organisation...and individual corporations', I suggest that the term could be usefully expanded to include the work of transnational NGOs and intergovernmental organisations, to the extent that their activities and intellectual output are integrated into a coalition's network of information and analysis.
- ³⁶ Luke, 2000.
- ³⁷ Michalopoulos, 2001; Blackhurst et al., 1999.
- ³⁸ In 2004, the WTO members without a permanent representative in Geneva included: Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Belize, Central African Republic, Chad, Dominica, Fiji, Gambia, Grenada, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Malawi, Maldives, Namibia, Niger, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Swaziland, and Togo. In 2004, developing countries in accession to the WTO without a permanent representative in Geneva included: the Bahamas, Equatorial Guinea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Tajikistan, Tonga and Vanuatu. See UNDP, 2005, p.
- ³⁹ Weekes, J. et al, 2001, pp. 69-70
- ⁴⁰ Deere, 2005, p. 11
- ⁴¹ Wolfe, 2004b, p. 582
- ⁴² See WTO, 2005b. The following developing countries in accession to the WTO also had less than four representatives present at the Hong Kong Ministerial: Bhutan, Cape Verde, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Seychelles and St Vincent and the Grenadines.
- ⁴³ Schott and Watal, 2000, p. 285
- ⁴⁴ Blackhurst, 2001.
- ⁴⁵ For an overview of the frustrations voiced by developing countries see Blackhurst, 2001.
- ⁴⁶ Narlikar, 2002, p. 182
- ⁴⁷ Patel, 2003.
- ⁴⁸ Kwa, 2002, p. 27
- ⁴⁹ Oxfam, 2005, p. 5
- ⁵⁰ Interviews with trade delegates, 13-18 December 2005, Hong Kong.
- ⁵¹ Prantl, 2005, p. 563. On the design of international institutions, see for example, Goldstein et al., 2000; Koremenos, Lipson and Snidal, 2001.
- ⁵² Wolfe, 2005, p. 640
- ⁵³ Interviews with vounsellors in the WTO Council and Trade Negotiations Committee Division, 18 July 2007, Switzerland.
- ⁵⁴ WTO (2006) WT/COMTD/W/151, 17 October 2006, and interviews with officers in the WTO Development Division. The WTO Regional Co-ordinator Internship programme provides funding for an intern to be based in the mission of a rotating co-ordinator for a period of six-months. The coalitions that have accessed funds from this programme include the ACP Group, the African Group, CARICOM, GRULAC, and the LDC Group.
- ⁵⁵ Some scholars have also pointed to the impact civil society and NGO activism, particularly during and after the Seattle Ministerial, have had on catalysing efforts to reform the WTO. See, for example, Narlikar, 2002; Scholte, 1999.
- ⁵⁶ Jones, 2005.
- ⁵⁷ For a recent application of principal agent theory to international organisations see, for example, Hawkins et al., 2006.
- ⁵⁸ Interviews with
- ⁵⁹ Heads of delegations at Ministerial Conferences, who are invited to be 'Friends of the Chair' act as 'consensus facilitators' on specific issue areas, are involved in consulting member states, listening to their views and feeding their input into the deliberations.
- ⁶⁰ For examples of these coercive pressures, see Jawara and Kwa, 2003; Narlikar and Odell, 2006
- ⁶¹ Jawara and Kwa, 2003, p. xxiii
- ⁶² Lee, 2006, p. 97
- ⁶³ Elsig, 2006, p. 21
- ⁶⁴ Prantl, 2005, p. 586
- ⁶⁵ Jones, 2005, has proposed that coalitions ought to be incorporated in a redesigned green room process that includes 'proxy platforms' of green room member states allied on particular issues, and guaranteed seats for the Quad members..
- ⁶⁶ For a recent discussion of the politics of implementation see Deere 2006.
- ⁶⁷ See, for example, Prantl, 2005, pp. 591-2

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