Transational Policy Articulations: India, Agriculture, and the WTO

Christopher L. Blackden
University of Kentucky, rubinfarr@hotmail.com

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Dr. Susan Roberts, Major Professor

Dr. Patricia Ehrkamp, Director of Graduate Studies

TRANSNATIONAL POLICY ARTICULATIONS:
INDIA, AGRICULTURE, AND THE WTO

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Geography in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

By
Christopher Laurence Blackden
Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Susan Roberts, Professor of Geography
Lexington, Kentucky

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

TRANSNATIONAL POLICY ARTICULATIONS: INDIA, AGRICULTURE, AND THE WTO

Agriculture remains one of the most contentious issues in the ongoing negotiations of the World Trade Organization, with serious implications for food security and the livelihood of farmers in the developing world. This dissertation examines the formation of agricultural trade policy and the politics and arguments surrounding it within the context of India's position in the World Trade Organization (WTO). The research has two components. A set of archival documents relating to India's participation in a WTO institution called the Trade Policy Review (TPR) was analyzed. In addition, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with a number of Indian experts and officials involved in agricultural trade policy. This project suggests a number of tentative conclusions with implications for political geography and particularly for the literature on policy transfer, neoliberalism, and Neo-Gramscian models of international relations. First, it finds that the WTO Secretariat plays a key role in promoting neoliberal ideas within the TPR institution and that the forms of argumentation used here can help to explain the resiliency of neoliberalism in the face of policy failure. Second, it shows that the Indian government has not accepted neoliberal policy models wholesale, but has exercised autonomy, selectivity, and adaptation in its liberalization programs. Third, it demonstrates that neoliberal ideas do not always favor the positions of developed countries. Finally, it supports the narrative of increasing developing country bargaining in the WTO and shows that the Indian representatives bolster their arguments by articulating them as being in the interest of the developing world in general.

KEY WORDS: WTO, India, policy transfer, neoliberalism, hegemony

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By

Christopher Laurence Blackden

Dr. Susan Roberts
Director of Dissertation

Dr. Patricia Ehrkamp
Director of Graduate Studies

March 27, 2014
Date

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The subject of agriculture remains perhaps the most contentious issue within ongoing negotiations in the World Trade Organization (WTO). The outcome of these negotiations has tremendous implications for food security and farmer livelihood in the developing world. It is one of a number of issues in the WTO that tends to line up developing countries against developed countries (with several exceptions, notably in relation to the Cairns Group, which will be explained in chapter 2). Therefore, the progress of these negotiations can tell us something about the relative power of developing countries within the WTO. India is a key player is WTO agricultural trade negotiations and for this reason India was chosen as the case study through which these issues will be examined in this dissertation.

This project of the present work is to examine agricultural trade policy formation in conditions where a country adheres to a set of international laws applicable in multiple countries, as is the case with the WTO agreements. It will examine how WTO law connects or articulates with agricultural policy in India. Although the WTO can be seen as a mechanism to standardize economic policies on a global scale among its members, it is flexible enough to allow India substantial discretion in designing its own unique trade liberalization program.

The objects of analysis in this project include policy outcomes in the WTO and India; the strategies that the Indian state deploys in the WTO system; the actors and discourses which contribute to these strategies; and the ways in which all these objects connect to one another. These connections will be looked at in three overlapping discursive-institutional political arenas: the WTO, the Indian state, and the community of policy-expertise in India. The WTO and agricultural trade issues are extensively discussed and debated in the expert community and much of the knowledge that informs policy choices is produced here. Actual policy plans and strategies are further developed within the narrower corridors of state power. And finally these strategies are deployed in WTO forums themselves.

This dissertation is based on a research program arranged around five research questions related to the case study:

1) What are the positions and strategies of the Indian government in the WTO system, especially with regard to agriculture?

2) How has the Indian government presented WTO membership and its consequence to the public?

3) How is the WTO and its relation to Indian agriculture understood and represented among the policy expert community in India?

4) What, if any, are understood (by officials and experts) to be the specific effects of the WTO agreements on Indian agriculture?

5) What do the first four questions suggest about the configuration of hegemonic knowledge production across transnational, state, and expert spaces?

Additionally, the research was guided by three more abstract, theoretical questions. These were aimed not at producing cut or dry answers, but rather to contribute ideas to the bodies of theory used to frame the project:

6) How does hegemony work within the WTO?

7) How can we conceptualize the articulations of sovereignty between an individual sovereign state and an institution of transnational governance?

8) Can questions six and seven tell us why developing countries remain in the WTO?

The research undertaken here consists of two components, each with their own methodological approaches. A set of documents was selected from the publicly available WTO archive. This archive is quite extensive and contained many subsets of documents of interest to the questions asked in this project. The set of documents concerning India's periodic Trade Policy Reviews was in the end chosen, because of their specific focus on India and their inclusion of a wide variety of speakers including representatives of India, representatives of other WTO members, and members of the WTO Secretariat. As will be explained in chapter 5, this set of documents is particular useful in revealing the normative orientation of the supposedly-neutral Secretariat.

The second component was a series of semi-structured interviews with officials and experts in India whom were concerned with different aspects of agricultural trade policy and WTO affairs. These 26 interviews were conducted over two intervals of fieldwork undertaken in New Delhi from 2008 and 2010. Questions focused on the background and institutional roles of the subjects; the flows of ideas, authority, and money through the institutions (including government bureaucracies, think tanks, and other bodies); and the ways in which they constructed objects, actors, relationships, processes, and events related to the subject matter. This component allowed me to map out relevant institutions involved in policy formation and the relationships between them. It also helped me to understand how key gate-keepers in policy circuits saw the objects of their professional concern.

The WTO and Agriculture as Objects of Study

The World Trade Organization provides an excellent mechanism to study hegemonic power relations, state theory, and economic development. As a decision-making body, the outcomes of its negotiations cannot be understood as the results of formal rules alone, but must take into account the bargaining powers, negotiating capacity, informal alliances, dominant discursive supports, and other informal mechanisms that are at work here. This makes the WTO an ideal arena for the study of hegemonic politics. It is also quite interesting from the point of view of state theory. As a governance body, it shares many aspects with the traditional territorial state without possessing territory (or a military), which provides an excellent opportunity to study government/ sovereignty in a case where some of classic elements are present, but not others. And finally, in regard to economic thought, the WTO is a seat of power for promoting and diffusing dominant development models, while also serving a forum to contest these.

Agriculture is, of course, of fundamental political and economic interest in the first place simply because everybody eats, and the distribution of adequate food is among the most basic developmental indicators. But it is of specific interest to ongoing WTO negotiations for at least two major reasons. One, it is an issue which tends to divide developed and developing countries (with many exceptions and qualifications). Two, it has constituted the main sticking point of WTO negotiations for at least the last decade. Arguably, the controversy over agriculture (and especially over agricultural subsidies) is what has prevented the successful conclusion of a second round of negotiations.

India as the Case Study

India, as a predominantly agrarian country, has major interests in the outcome of WTO agriculture negotiations. On one hand, India has enormous potential as an agricultural exporter (much of it so far unrealized, due in part to subsidized competition from developed economies). On the other, India relies on its domestic food production to feed its vast population, much of which lives uncomfortably close to subsistence level. Consequently, Indian policy-makers tend to be wary of any reforms (such as lowering tariffs or de-controlling grain prices) that could destabilize its food system. There is vigorous debate within India over how trade liberalization is affecting rural poverty.

In choosing India as my case study, I am making a strategic choice to focus on a 'powerful' developing country rather than a 'typical' one. India shares many broad characteristics and interests with other countries generally classified as developing, including a large population living at or near subsistence levels and a large portion of its workforce engaged in agriculture. India, however, is in a better bargaining position than most other developing countries in the WTO. Despite its relative poverty, the sheer size of its economy makes it more difficult to marginalize, ignore, or buy-off in the negotiating process. India has also assumed a leadership role among developing states in the WTO, especially in its capacity as a leader in the G20 ('Group of 20') faction and its role as one of the three developing countries in the 'Five Interested Parties' (FIPs) negotiations. Therefore, its counter-hegemonic struggles within the WTO are more likely to bear fruit than those of other developing states.

The above must be qualified by stating that the advance of India's interests within the WTO does not necessarily translate into the advance of developing states generally (although it might). India is in many respects an atypical developing state, and its strategic interests and options do not necessarily correspond with the rest of the developing world. Further, the interests of elites within India with regard to the WTO do not necessarily correspond to those of most of India's population.

Operationalizing the Research

The analysis for this project focused on two main sets of statements, one archival and one produced dynamically through 26 interviews undertaken during the course of fieldwork in Delhi. The archival component took the form of documents associated with a WTO procedure known as a 'Trade Policy Review.' India was subject to this review five times: in 1993 (then as part of GATT, preceding the formal inauguration of the WTO), 1998, 2002, 2007, and 2011. The first and last reviews – 1993 and 2011 – were excluded from analysis, as falling outside of the historical period of interest. The interviews were conducted during two visits to India in 2008-2010. They were semi-structured and open-ended and the subjects were drawn from officials and experts concerned with India's agricultural trade policy.

The archival material associated with the three Trade Policy Reviews has been most been most useful in regard to question one. The interviews, which provided extensive material on agro-trade policy arguments within India, and their institutional context, substantially addressed questions three, four, five, and six.

As noted, the 'theoretical' questions 6 through 9 cannot be answered in a decisive fashion, but the research conducted does shed some light on the issues addressed and suggests refinements and extensions for existing theory.

Contributions to the Literature

This project is meant primarily as an empirical contribution to the field of political geography. Some of it, particularly the observations on neoliberalism, may be of interest to economic geographers. It also touches upon some literatures which are of interest to fields outside of geography, particularly political science and social theory. These include the literatures on policy transfer, neoliberalism, Neo-Gramscian international relations theory, international institutions, and state theory.

The research undertaken here answers Marsh and Sherman's (2009) call for more research focused on policy transfer in the developing world and Stone's (2004) call for more focus international institutions and non-state actors. It also is attentive, especially in the interview component, to role of specific institutional sites and individuals play in policy transfer, in accordance with the approach to policy transfer (or policy mobilities) among geographers

(Larner and Laurie 2010; Prince 2012a). This research finds that policy ideas spread into (and out of) India not only through formal mechanisms like WTO obligations and negotiations, but also via think tanks and research institutions with transnational connections. It also finds that policy transfers in the Indian context often involve selectivity, hybridization, and mutation, as is predicted by much of the geography literature on policy mobilities (Peck and Theodore 2001, 2010; McCann and Ward 2012; Prince 2012b).

Neoliberalism is a term used to describe economic policy which seeks to maximize the regulatory role of competitive markets and minimize the regulatory role of government in the economy. This entails promoting policies to lower trade barriers, deregulate business and finance, privatize government-run enterprises, decontrol prices, and reduces subsidies; that is, many of the policies pushed in the WTO and elaborated in the case of this research in the Secretariat Reports of the Trade Policy Review processes. Neoliberalism is, however, a much contested term, partly for the reason that its proponents often do not self-identify with it (Peck, Brenner, and Theordore 2009). It is however very useful to describe a general attitude of free-market zealotry which was particularly prominent and pervasive globally during the period examined in this project (about 1995- 2010). Peck, Brenner, and Theodore 2010a, 2012) note that even after taking somewhat of an intellectual beating in with the Great Recession in 2008, neoliberalism remains strong and influential.

The term neoliberalism is never used in the three Trade Policy Reviews studied in this project, but it provides a good description of the policy orthodoxies promoted by the Secretariat. It is also rarely mentioned by the subjects of the semi-structured interviews, where India's market-oriented reforms are generally described as merely liberal. And I agree with this characterization; India's reforms do not approach the extreme laissez faire character called for in neoliberal theory. Still the term neoliberalism can be used in the context to describe a globally pervasive influence which influences Indian policy to go in a ‘neoliberal direction,’ including through the mechanisms of the WTO.

The original WTO agreement as it emerged from the Uruguay Round of negotiations (1986- 1994) is widely characterized as being biased toward developed economies and against developing economies (Steinberg 2002; Kwa and Jawara 2004; Lee & Smith 2008; Sharma 2009), despite the numerical superiority of developing countries in the WTO. This can be explained partly by the simple material bargaining capacity of wealthier countries compared to poorer countries, but it seems likely that other aspects such as the structure of the WTO as an institution (Kwa and Jawara 2004; Chimni 2006; Steinberg 2002; Laidi 2008; Narlikar 2006) and the dominance of neoliberal ideas at the time (Chang 2003; Wade 2003) also played significant roles in disadvantaging developing countries. This idea of material capabilities, ideas, and institutions interacting to create hegemonic power structures is the basis for the school of thought in international relations called Neo-Gramscian, developed by Robert Cox (1981, 1983) and his followers (Gale 1998; Bieler and Morton 2004) as an alternative to state-centric and ahistoric models of international relations.

This Neo-Gramscian framework can help explain the disadvantage that developing countries face in the WTO, but it can also help to explain the more recent assertiveness of developing countries in the Doha Round (1991- present) of WTO negotiations. Cox’s model also allows for institutions created to serve the hegemonic purposes of great powers to take on “their own life” (Cox 1981; Gale 1998) and possibly even become an instrument of counter-hegemony.

Outline of the Dissertation

The dissertation breaks down into two major parts. The four chapters introduce the project, describe the historical context and body literature in which it is situated, and describes the methods used. The last five chapters then describe the empirical findings and substantive contributions which the project makes.

This introduction has provided an overview of the project. The problems that it addresses have been described, the research questions have been set up, and a brief overview of the theoretical framework and methodology has been provided. Chapter 2 provides a historical overview of the World Trade Organization and summarizes the political-economic context for Indian agricultural trade policy. Chapter 3 explores the some bodies of literature relevant to the project and connects them to the subsequent research. These include the literatures on policy transfer, neoliberalism, Neo-Gramscian interpretations of international institutions, and state theory. This portion of the dissertation concludes with chapter 4, describing the methods used, including discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews.

The empirical portion of the dissertation can be further subdivided into three components. Chapters 5- 7 examine the Trade Policy Review documents. Chapter 5 begins by giving an overview of the TPR mechanism, with attention to the procedures and the roles of the various speakers. The second half of the chapter provides a statistical description of the volume of statements contributed by various speakers (using wordcount as a proxy). Chapter 6 examines the content of the statements in these documents and thematic patterns that tie them together. This is by the longest chapter and it describes a number of discursive regularities and strategies emerging from the documents, including the Secretariat's promotion of neoliberal orthodoxy, the Indian government's subversion of some these orthodoxies, and the latter's rhetorical strategy to position itself as speaking for the developing world. Chapter 7 continues along these lines, but focuses specifically on statements concerning agriculture. In this analysis, contending arguments for agricultural exceptionalism and anti-exceptionalism emerge, as well as a distinction between the types of agro-exceptionalism tending to be developing and developed countries respectively.

Chapter 8 is an analysis of the semi-structured interviews undertaken with officials and experts in India. These interview subjects were drawn from public and private institutions, as well as those in between. These included officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry; research institutions and agencies dependent on the government for funding; private think tanks; and other institutions, affiliated with international organizations and business lobbies. A high degree of interaction was found among these institutions, including a high degree of personnel interchange among them (except in the case of civil servants) and many had international connections. The research in this chapter supports the view that liberalization in India was propelled more by an indigenous intellectual movement than by top-down coercive imposition from international institutions like the WTO (Ahmed 2009).

The conclusion, chapter 9, reiterates the research questions and explains how the research has answered them. It also outlines some of the major contributions this project makes to the bodies of literature described in chapter 3. It ends with a brief discussion of some possible outcomes of the current Doha Round of negotiations and what these might mean in the context of the hegemonic sketches proposed earlier in the chapter.

Chapter 2: Background

Explaining the WTO

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is a multi-state body formed to administer a set of interlocking international agreements, which are primarily concerned with trade regulation. It also serves as a forum to negotiate interpretations of and alterations to these agreements. It officially came into existence on January 1, 1995, after several years of negotiations. It is explicitly committed to lowering trade barriers and to economic liberalization in general. It currently has 159 members. WTO agreements cover a vast sweep of economic and political policy realms, not merely trade policy, but other aspects of policy (such as environmental regulations) that can be argued to impact trade. Member states are obligated to alter their policies and domestic laws to accord with the agreements.

The WTO was formed at the height of what is often called the "Washington Consensus" – a period when international economic expertise was dominated by the conviction that markets functioned better with less government regulation and that sought to reform economies in this direction. The Washington Consensus has not ended, although it has since been weakened, primarily by the Southeast Asian Meltdown of the late 1990s and more recently by the global financial crisis starting in 2007. The general reforms pursued by this movement included lowering trade barriers, privatizing state-run enterprises and services, and deregulating business – a set of policy prescriptions also known as Neoliberalism. Somewhat paradoxically for an anti-state orientation, this policy reform movement was promoted and enforced primarily by top-down multilateral bodies like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund – global institutions which in effect 'regulated deregulation.' The World Trade

Organization arose out of this orthodoxy and embodied it, especially with regard to the agenda of lowering trade barriers.

In 1995, the WTO already included most of the world's recognized sovereign states and since then has expanded to encompass most of the rest, notably China in 2001 and Russia in 2012. Only about 35 countries are not members of the WTO and most of these have observer status. Most members are sovereign states, but there are exceptions. Although each of the 28 members of the European Union is also a member of the WTO, the EU itself is considered a distinct member. For negotiating purposes, all EU countries are represented by a single delegation. Hong Kong and Macao are parts of China and yet both have separate membership status in the WTO (both in fact were members of the WTO before China joined and before either of them were part of China)[1]. Taiwan is also recognized as a member under the name "Chinese Taipei," despite its complicated *de jure* status as part of China. That being said, the sovereign state is the norm for WTO membership.

Most of the constituent agreements of the WTO took their present form during a series of multilateral negotiations known as the Uruguay Round, taking place from 1986- 1994. These built upon and incorporated an older set of international agreements known as GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), dating from 1947. The Uruguay Round agreements regulate a vast sweep of international economic policy, including tariff levels, the use of non-tariff trade barriers, subsidies, copyright law, trade in services, and foreign investment. The foundational WTO agreements also included provisions for their own alteration and augmentation in expected future negotiations. Thus far, few changes have been made to the original agreement other than time-dependent clauses from the Uruguay Round kicking in (such as the expiration of the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing in 2005).

[1] Hong Kong reverted to Chinese control in 1997; Macau did so in 1999.

The WTO was more comprehensive than GATT, extending trade rules to new areas like services and intellectual property rights. Agriculture also came under treaty regulation, although it was subject to a much less ambitious liberalization than other sectors. Both agriculture and textiles were deemed exceptional enough to each merit a separate agreements, a point to which we shall return. In addition, the WTO included a far more robust system of surveillance and enforcement than GATT, including regular trade reviews of its members, an institutionalized mechanism to hear complaints and settle disputes, and a system for authorizing retaliatory trade sanctions in the event of non-compliance.

The structure of the WTO can be thought of as analogous to a 'three branches of government' model. The Ministerial Meeting system is the 'legislature' where alterations and additions to the agreements are negotiated. The permanent member missions in Geneva constitute the WTO General Council, a sort of executive branch which is headed by the Director-General of the WTO and handles day-to-day administrative matters. And finally, the WTO version of a judiciary is its Dispute Settlement Mechanism, which includes a Dispute Settlement Body (really, just the General Council meeting under a different name) and a standing panel of seven experts in international trade law called the Appellate Body.

The Uruguay Round was not meant to be the end state of the WTO. Rather it was seen as a platform which would be expanded upon in future comprehensive negotiations and agreements. For this reason, the WTO holds what is called a Ministerial Meeting every two years or so, always in a different city. It is attended by member delegations, usually led by a member government's minister of trade or equivalent. It is here that major decisions towards new agreements are taken. Early optimism that this institution would soon replace the Uruguay Round agreements with something even more comprehensive went unfulfilled. Most Ministerials do end up producing token agreements, but so far these have been agreements mainly about the terms of future negotiations – what is on the table, what metrics and formulas will be used, etc. – rather than specific binding laws. A new agreement requires unanimous consent of all members and negotiations here are often contentious. Two of the Ministerials, Seattle in 1999 and Cancun in 2003, broke down without even signing a token declaration. At present, the body of law set up during the Uruguay Round remains mostly unaltered.

In between Ministerials, the General Council and the Secretariat (the bureaucratic staff of the WTO), carry out routine functions of the WTO. These include undertaking Trade Policy Reviews and settling disputes among members. The Trade Policy Review is an institution which will be examined in detail in chapters 5- 7. Here the General Council meets as the Trade Policy Review Body and critiques the economic policies of one member government. Each member is required to submit to such a review periodically, the frequency varying depending on the size of its economy and its share of world trade (WTO 2013a).

The General Council also meets as the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) to decide the outcome of trade disputes among members. Under the Dispute Settlement Mechanism, one or more members can file suit against one or more other members if the former believe that the latter have somehow violated their WTO obligations, for instance if their tariffs on some product exceed the limitations agreed to in the Uruguay Round. Three experts are then chosen from the Appellate Body to form a panel to evaluate the case. The panel issues a recommendation and then the DSB meets to accept or reject the recommendations. If the defending member is found to be in violation, they are required to render compensation and alter their practices. If they fail to do so, then the members which brought the suit are authorized to impose limited trade sanctions on the offending member. The Appellate Body consists of professional functionaries rather than representatives of members. Those serving upon it are barred from holding any concurrent official positions in their home country.

The WTO's permanent bureaucracy in Geneva, called the Secretariat occupies a key position in the institutional structure of the WTO. While it has no decision-making power, it is responsible for planning meeting logistics, for producing and circulating documents, and dispensing technical advice. At present it includes 629 staff, mostly economists and lawyers and mostly from Europe, the United States, and Canada. It has a longer history than the WTO itself, being 'inherited' from GATT. Like the Appellate body, the Secretariat is in theory absolutely neutral, serving only to facilitate the conditions for the member representatives to negotiate and make decisions. One of its roles is to undertake and write up a report critiquing the economic policy of any country undergoing a Trade Policy Review. We will examine some of these reports in detail in the chapters on Trade Policy Reviews.

Agriculture in the Uruguay Round

Agricultural trade occupies a somewhat exceptional position within the sweep of WTO agreements. The fact that agriculture required a separate agreement is testimony to the special status with which it is regarded.

Within the WTO body of law, the URAA – the Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture (sometimes also abbreviated as AoA, "Agreement on Agriculture") – remains the basic framework for regulating agricultural trade. It came into effect at the inception of the WTO in 1995, and has remained substantially unchanged since then, except for the expiration of the so-called 'Peace Clause' in article 13. This is not to say that it has not been differentially interpreted; the victory of Brazil in 2004 in its suit against the United States over cotton subsidies represented a more rigid interpretation of the URAA than had been the case in the past. The URAA was written with the intention that it would be temporary; article 20 dictated that it should be renegotiated in the next round of talks. However, the original schedule for the renegotiations was never met and most of the negotiations in the meantime have merely been over the terms of future negotiations. Although the URAA was the only agreement to concern itself exclusively with agriculture, other Uruguay Round agreements – notably the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures – had significant implications for agricultural trade.

One of the functions of the URAA was to set up the regulatory framework for agricultural subsidies. This is important, because it was and remains one of the most contentious issues in the negotiations. Subsidies are a less obvious trade barrier than tariffs, the policy instrument with which the WTO is most concerned. Tariffs are taxes on trade, primarily on imports, which shield domestic producers from international competition by adding to the cost of imported products. In contrast, subsidies protect domestic producers by paying part of the production costs, thus lowering the price of domestically produced goods in relation to the price of imports. Another major difference, from a fiscal perspective, is that tariffs provide revenue to the government while subsidies cost the government revenue. This is an important difference especially for developing economies, which are less able to foot the bill for expensive subsidies than developed economies, and at the same time are in more need of the revenue that tariffs provide.

The United States and many European countries went into the Uruguay Round with very extensive systems of agricultural subsidies which they were not willing to give up easily. The URAA was a compromise where they got to keep the bulk of their subsidies, but were required to reform the allocation mechanism for these to minimize trade distortions. This led to a detailed and confusing classification system which categorizes different types of agricultural subsidies based on how much they were thought to distort market prices and trade. The classification system included three 'boxes' named for different colors. The 'Amber Box' contained subsidies thought to be most trade-distorting, those which directly encouraged overproduction or export-dumping. The 'Green Box' contained subsidies thought to be minimally trade-distorting, based on the idea that such subsidies were decoupled from production (that is, the amount of the subsidy was not related to amount of commodities produced). Another category, called the 'Blue Box' was added at the insistence of the European Union during the Uruguay Round (Josling 2000: 107) and it was to contain subsidies which were linked to production, but which included mechanisms to limit overproduction (for instance, programs that automatically cut off payments once a certain level of production had been achieved). The boxes were controversial and the question of which subsidies should go in which box was often open to dispute.

The Amber Box was particularly important, because these subsidies were subject to quantitative restrictions. They were used to calculate a number called the Aggregate Measure of Support or AMS. The AMS was not to exceed a specified percentage (5% for developed countries, 10% for developing countries) of the total value of agricultural production for the member economy in a given year. After joining the WTO, the United States and the EU moved to reform their agricultural support programs so as to move as many subsidies as possible from the Amber Box to the other boxes and thus escape the limitations of AMS (Josling 2000: 106).

Outside of the URAA, the agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures also had implications for agricultural subsidies. The SCM, especially articles 5 and 6, outlaws subsidies that damage another country's market for the same good. The SCM definition of a subsidy, outlined in Article I of the document, includes direct payments by the government, tax breaks, provision of goods and services other than infrastructure by the government, purchase of goods from the party by the government, and the funding or empowerment by the government of a private group that in turn provides the type of support noted above. Article 13 of the URAA – the so called 'Peace Clause' provided, at least temporarily, a way around this. It mandated that as long as a country's combined Amber and Blue Boxes (Green is not counted here) did not exceed the level of subsidies it had provided in the base year 1992, its agricultural subsidies were exempt from the SMC and other agreements. This clause was meant to be temporary, however, and expired at the end of 2004.

The text of the URAA is on the WTO website (WTO 2013b); for a summary of the 'boxes' see WTO 2004d; for a readable general explanation of the URAA and the issues surrounding it, see Margaret Rosso Grossman (2003).

Alliances within the WTO

Alliances of varying degrees of formality and persistence are often formed among members seen as having similar interests on specific issues. These informal groupings of countries often meet among themselves prior to Ministerial Meetings to hammer out a common position on specific issues. Some of the most important of these blocs include the Quad, consisting of the The EU, United States, Japan, and Canada; the Cairns Group, consisting of many agricultural exporters, developed and developing; the G20, consisting of about 20 (membership tends to fluctuate) of the larger developing economies, formed mainly to advocate for stronger rules against agricultural subsidies; and the G33, another coalition of developing countries formed to advocate for special and differential treatment for developing economies in the application of WTO rules.

The Quad

As its name implies, the Quad has four members – The EU, USA, Japan, and Canada. However, it represents a much larger group of countries, given that the EU itself has 28 members. These four members also represent the most powerful economies in the WTO and the most influential governments in international trade negotiations, with experience going back to the foundation of GATT in 1947. Quad countries do not always agree on every issue (not even on those relating to agriculture). For example, the EU and Japan have generally been more enthusiastic about the so-called 'Singapore Issues' (see below) than the United States. The key to their strength is not only that they are individually big and powerful economies, but that their representatives meet informally before official Ministerials in order to work out differences among themselves. In this way, they can put up a united front at the Ministerials, creating a force that is difficult (but, as events have shown, not impossible) to resist (Kwa and Jawara 2004: 22, 56- 59).

With the notable exception of Canada, the Quad countries are the ones within the WTO most committed to defending farm subsidies. However, even along the US-EU axis there are substantial disagreements. The United States' subsidies are high and it seeks to keep them that way, but not as high as the EU's. Thus, the US will sometimes join the attack on the EU's farm policies, claiming that the latter's subsidies are excessive, while its own are reasonable.

Cairns Group

Prior to the formation of the G20, the Cairns Group was the major faction pushing for agricultural liberalization within the WTO. It is older than the WTO itself, being formed in 1986 while the Uruguay Round was still in its early stages. The members of the Cairns Group tend to be countries with strong agricultural exports. Currently there are 19 members; there were 17 at the time of Cancun. Three are developed countries (Australia, New Zealand, and Canada) and the rest are developing, mostly from Latin America (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Paraguay, and Peru) and Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand), with two more from other regions (Pakistan and South Africa). Cairns membership overlaps with both the Quad (Canada belongs to both) and with the G20 (over half of the Cairns Group are also members of the G20, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, and Thailand; Colombia and Costa Rica are former members of the G20).

Unlike the G20, it advocates across-the-board agricultural liberalization, not just a reduction in farm subsidies. The position of the Cairns group is that agricultural trade should be treated like any other sector, and subject to similar rules and disciplines as other goods and services, basically that its special status governed by a separate agreement should be ended. Their rhetoric is aimed mainly at the EU, to a lesser extent against the US (the US sometimes aligns itself with the Cairns Group in pressing the EU for subsidy reduction). They present themselves as champions of the poor farmers in developing countries that would benefit from higher agricultural prices and also claim to support the special and differential principle, which they interpret as giving developing countries more time and flexibility to implement reforms (NFU 2001). In arguing for indiscriminate liberalization, however, the Cairns Group limited its appeal among developing countries, like India, which seek to protect their domestic markets from dumping and/ or have concerns about food security.

According to Kwa and Jawara (2004: xxvi) some countries within the Cairns Group were less committed to liberalization than others. They credit some members - notably Indonesia and Philippines - with splitting the group over concern for their own modest protection policies in the run-up to the 2003 Cancun ministerial summit.

G20

In August 2003, a month before the Cancun Ministerial, the EU and US concluded their personal pre-meeting negotiations and jointly presented a framework for Cancun that would sidestep the agricultural subsidy issue. When the Cairns Group failed to put up any significant resistance, Brazil and several of its other developing country members helped form the G20. The G20 distinguished itself from Cairns by narrowing its focus from agricultural liberalization per se to just the issue of subsidies in developed countries. Thus it had an issue that almost all developing countries, even those with high agricultural tariffs, could rally around. Thus, several non-Cairns developing countries, including the mammoths India and China, also joined the G20 (Kwa and Jawara 2004: xxvi; Govt. of India 2005: 7- 8). By delinking subsidies and tariffs, the G20 effected a revolution in WTO alignments. It now had an issue that almost all developing countries, even those with high agricultural tariffs, could rally around. Thus, several non-Cairns developing countries, including the major negotiating powers India and China, also joined the G20 (Kwa and Jawara 2004: xxvi; Govt. of India 2005: 7- 8; Ranjan 2005). Malaysia and Uruguay were the only developing Cairns members not to join the G20. In September in Cancun, the G20, supported by most developing countries, managed to resist the implementation of the EU-US framework and the summit ended without a new agreement.

All members of the G20, current and former, are developing countries. The original membership of the G20 in 2003 included Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Mexico, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, and Venezuela. El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Colombia later left, while several other countries joined. The number of members has fluctuated and has almost never been exactly 20, although the name has stuck. The G20 is frequently seen as a vanguard broadly representing the developing world. Its own rhetoric supports this claim as is evident in the following excerpt from a G20 press release following a meeting in New Delhi in early 2005:

> The G20 Ministers have firmly believed that developing countries must garner collective strength if they are to succeed in eliminating the practices of a small group of rich nations that... depress prices, gain undue market shares and compromise the food security and livelihood of billions of farmers across the developing countries. The realization of the true potential of the agricultural sector of in developing countries has been impeded for far too long (G20 2005: 19).

The rhetoric here and in similar releases sets the subsidy issue up as one of developed versus developing states and it also claims a position for the G20 as informal spokesperson for the developing world.

Within the framework of hegemonic WTO politics, the G20 has a number of advantages making it a competitive political force. One is the sheer collective size of its membership. The G20 includes the world's two most populous countries, India and China, as well as several of the more industrially advanced developing economies, such as Brazil, Argentina, Thailand, and South Africa. According to Ranjan (2005: 2), the members of the G20 represent "almost 57 percent of the world population, 70 percent of the total farmers of the world, and 26 percent of the total exports in agriculture." Their relatively large economies give them certain political advantages in WTO politics. They cannot be ignored or marginalized in the negotiations to the same extent that most developing countries are; this also makes them less vulnerable (though not entirely invulnerable) to bilateral pressure. Large countries like India, Brazil, and Indonesia can also afford to send large delegations to WTO meetings, comparable in size to those sent by developed countries (Kwa and Jawara: 86).

The members meet frequently among themselves, no less than six times between Cancun and Hong Kong (Twice in Brazil, Once each in India and Pakistan, and twice in Geneva).

Like the Quad strategy among developed countries, this allows the G20 to hammer out differences among themselves beforehand, so that they can present a united front later. The G20 members in their various meetings are also able to pool their technical expertise. As one Indian government publication put it this “has served to overcome the serious lacuna in earlier rounds of negotiations when developing countries lacked individual capacity and collective coherence in their approach to the negotiations” (Govt. of India 2005: 7). Many members of the G20 belong to other coalitions, as well (Ranjan 2005). Its internal solidarity is bolstered by its close ties with other coalitions of developing countries, such as the G33 and G90 (Sharma 2005). It has held consultations with other coalitions of developing countries.

The G20 has tried to keep its focus on one narrow issue that its members can all agree on - that of reducing farm subsidies in rich economies. It has taken positions on other issues, such as non-agricultural tariffs, only when these can be used as bargaining chips on the subsidy issue. The G20 is roughly divided between major agro-exporters like Brazil and Argentina, and countries like India and Pakistan that have protective interests regarding their domestic agricultural markets (Ranjan 2005: 4- 11). By targeting subsidies in developed countries, while remaining indifferent to agricultural tariffs in developing countries, the G20 has forged a position which unites not only its own members, but is more or less acceptable to developing countries in general. The G20 has achieved some qualified successes, mostly at bringing developed countries to the negotiating table.

Post-Uruguay Round Negotiations

The Uruguay Round ended with a mandate for further negotiations to take place. Agriculture was one of the issues slated among the ‘built-in’ agendas to be renegotiated in the next round of talks. At the first WTO Ministerial in Singapore in 1996 a set of new negotiating issues was proposed (concerning investment, competition, government procurement, and customs procedures), thereafter called the 'Singapore issues' or simply the 'new issues.' This caused one of the initial developing-developed economy divides in the WTO, with many developing countries opposing the inclusion of the Singapore Issues in the current round of negotiations. Next there was a brief attempt by the United States to push for the inclusion of labor standards, which was vehemently rejected by most developing country representatives and was probably the main reason for the Collapse of the 2nd Ministerial at Seattle in 1999. Seattle was also notable for attracting a large protest movement bringing together an eclectic group of interests (including labor, environmental, and anti-globalization groups) which opposed the WTO for a variety of reasons; such protests have become a hallmark of WTO negotiations ever since.

The Doha Ministerial in 2001 kicked off a new 'round' or sequence of negotiations, which includes Cancun and all subsequent Ministerials. It is sometimes referred to as the Doha Development Round, as it was intended to address the concerns of developing members more than the Uruguay Round had done. As described above, the Cancun Ministerial in 2003 was more contentious. The EU and US had set out at Cancun to exclude any meaningful farm subsidy reform from the WTO agenda, while adding the Singapore Issues to the negotiating agenda. The G20 was formed specifically to oppose this move. It was willing to offer concessions on the Singapore Issues in exchange for serious commitments on subsidy reduction. Neither side blinked, everyone went home without an agreement, and each side blamed the other for their unreasonable intransigence. The United States subsequently managed to convince a few Latin American countries (Guatemala, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru) to quit the G20+ by offering them favorable bilateral trade deals. Although neither side won a clear victory at Cancun, the ability of the G20 to prevent an EU-US fait accompli gave the former a tremendous boost in prestige and they have been at the forefront of all major WTO negotiations since then.

In 2004, a small negotiating group called the 'Five Interested Parties' (FIPs) was formed to help hammer out an agreement. It included Brazil and India, two of the leaders of the G20, Australia (one of the developing countries in the Cairns Group), the EU, and the US. This led to the so-called "July Framework" which was approved by the WTO as a whole on August 1st. It committed to the principle of subsidy reduction, by specific amounts that were to be determined later. One of the concessions made in exchange was a continuance of the controversial 'blue box' (see above) under stricter limitations, also to be decided later (Ranjan 2005: 4- 5; Chandrasekhar & Pal 2004). Three out of four of the Singapore issues were officially dropped from the Doha Round, but the green light was given on one of them - trade facilitation. Another sub-section of the agreement on non-agricultural market access (NAMA) committed WTO members to further reduction of tariffs on industrial goods (WTO 2013c). Bello and Kwa (2004) saw this agreement as a huge defeat for developing countries and a sell-out on the part of Brazil and India. Brazil and India, two of the key leaders of developing country stand at Cancun, were bought off with targeted concessions. The portion of the agreement referring to agriculture protection focused on cutting subsidies rather than tariffs, so they did not endanger India's agricultural protection program. Brazil was happy, because reduced subsidies meant that it should be able to get higher prices and greater market access for its agricultural exports. Kwa and Bello (2004) note that the agreement left the EU and US plenty of room to maneuver their threatened amber box subsidies into the blue and green boxes. They also describe the new NAMA agreement as a "prescription for... deindustrialization" of developing countries (continuing in Uruguay Round tradition).

In December 2005, the sixth WTO ministerial conference was held in Hong Kong. A slightly less ambiguous subsidy-reduction agreement was made here, although it committed developed countries to only modest reductions at best. The centerpiece for the G20 is an agreement to eliminate all so-called 'export subsidies' by 2013. Export subsidies are those subsidies which not only directly encourage production, but production specifically for export; that is, they are subsidies designed for intentional dumping. In exchange, the G20 and other developing countries gave into certain demands in other areas, including substantial reductions on non-agricultural tariffs and concessions on services. Hong Kong is variously interpreted as a modest victory for developing countries, where the G20 finally managed to wring a few definite concessions out of the developed countries, especially the EU; as a major defeat for developing countries, where they accepted token and ineffective gestures toward subsidy-reduction in exchange for onerous concessions in other areas; or a vacuous, non-committal agreement for all sides, designed mainly to save face for the WTO by avoiding another Cancun-style breakdown. Bello (2005) has suggested that the compromises at Hong Kong represented an attempt to buy the leaders of the G20 (Brazil and India) off with admittance to the 'New Quad' - the negotiating circle of the most powerful developed countries - in exchange for selling out the weaker developing economies.

Contextualizing India: Multilateralism and Food Security

India is the world's 2nd largest country by population with 1.2 billion people. Moreover, it is expected to surpass China as the world's most populous country within the next several years (US Government 2014). India is characterized by the World Bank (2014) as a lower middle income economy. It is a federal, parliamentary democracy and its population is notable for its linguistic and religious diversity. Since gaining independence in 1947, India has enjoyed uninterrupted civilian government, although it has fought a number of wars with neighboring countries during this time.

India has a long history of active participation in international bodies. It officially joined the UN in 1945 (United Nations 2014), two years before it ceased to a British colony. It was also a founding member of GATT in 1947. Although it is often characterized as more of an observer than active participant in this institution (Mukherjee and Malone 2011), others have noted the role of the Indian representatives as advocates for developing countries in the evolution of this organization (Narlikar 2006; Efstathopoulos 2012). Of key importance was India's role in organizing the non-aligned movement (NAM) early in the Cold War to help keep recently decolonized states from entanglement in superpower diplomacy and proxy wars. This role was important in building up India's legitimacy as a representative of developing country interest (Mukherjee and Malone 2011; Narlikar 2006). This history of developing world leadership later helped Indian delegations in the coalition-building politics of the WTO (Efstathopoulos 2012).

According to the 2011 Census of India (Government of India 2014a), India had a rural population of 833 million, out of a population of just over 1.2 billion. Out of 402 million employed, 234.1 million worked in agriculture, breaking down to 127.3 million farmers and 106.8 million laborers. Despite employing more than half of the working population, agriculture only accounted for only 13.7% of Indian gross domestic product in 2012- 2013 (Government of India 2013). This is a ratio which has been shrinking steadily for decades (Hoda and Gulati 2007: 41); although the value of agricultural output (corrected for inflation) continues to grow in absolute terms, it has done so at a much slower rate than the rest of the economy. In general Indian farms are small and shrinking, with the average farm size in 2010- 2011 being only 1.15 hectares (GOI 2014b), while the number of landless agricultural laborers is growing

(Government of India 2014a). Shrinking farm size was a topic of some concern in the 2007 Indian Trade Policy review, as will be seen in chapter 7.

India contains a variety of climatic zones, and the diversity of crops grown reflects this. Grains for domestic consumption, however, dominate production, especially wheat and rice. Rice production is concentrated in the East and South, while wheat dominates the North and West. These zones are not mutually exclusive, however, and rice and wheat are sometimes grown in the same fields at different times of year. Other major crops include cotton, millet, maize, potatoes, and beans. India has traditionally had a significant presence in world agricultural markets for a small number of products, notably tea and spices. These are still important today, but have declined relative to other exports.

One of India's crowning economic achievements of the last 50 years was the gaining of food self-sufficiency. A reliable and self-sufficient agricultural economy capable of feeding a billion people was not achieved overnight. This economic miracle is even more impressive when one factors in that it was aiming at a moving target: India's rapidly growing population. The same environment that could not feed half a billion people in the 1960s can feed twice that today.

Before independence, British India had suffered from periodic devastating famines. The Bengal famine in 1943, for example, resulted in an estimated 3 million deaths (Acharya: 1983: 52- 58). Despite this, agriculture was not emphasized in the early economic planning of independent India and substantial grain had to be imported from the United States under the latter's "Food for Peace" legislation or Public Law 480. This worked for several years, but eventually dependence on PL 480 imports came to undermine India's sovereignty. In the mid-1960s, the United States under the Johnson administration began to demand policy conditions in exchange for the continuation of food aid and this coincided with a period of drought which made India particularly desperate for grain imports. The most humiliating of these conditions was a demand that India end its opposition to the US war in Vietnam in the United Nations (Acharya: 1983: 81- 95; Merill, Dennis: 207- 208; Kux 1992: 255- 261; Ananth 2010: 68- 73; Malhotra 2010).

The danger of famine and the fear of compromised sovereignty which came along with food imports helped to prompt what became known as the 'Green Revolution' in India. This constituted an effort beginning in the late 1960s to drastically increase India's agricultural yields through the use of high-yield seed varieties, construction of irrigation works, and increased use of fertilizer and pesticides. Within a decade food yields had increased to the point where India became a net exporter of food (Gupta 1998: 52- 60).

Chapter 3: Literature Review

This dissertation constitutes a study hegemonic politics in international and Indian agricultural trade policy. It can be broken down into two component discourse analyses. One of them is archival and deals with arguments made within one set of fora (the Trade Policy Review Mechanism). The other takes the form of interviews with experts and officials in India. The methodological considerations for this will be discussed in the following chapter. This chapter will lay out the literature and theoretical framework which informs the research and contextualize the research within the relevant scholarship. Key concepts here include hegemony and neoliberalism, and the roles that international organizations, sovereign states, and think tanks play in them. This project is meant primarily as a contribution to political geography. Although it touches tangentially upon the geography of agriculture and trade and other aspects of economic geography, it is primarily looking at policy formation on the level of government bureaucracies, think tanks, and international fora. It is a project about bureaucracies and policy wonks, not about farmers or firms. Outside of geography, the most useful literature comes from international political economy and social theory.

This dissertation draws on a number of literatures. As a project interested in policy formation it works with models and typologies growing out of the policy transfer literature in political science and the related policy mobilities literature in geography. The literature on neoliberalism is also useful in contextualizing the varieties of policy spreading during the historical period under investigation (roughly 1995- 2010) and especially policies promoted by the World Trade Organization. Models of neo-Gramscian hegemony are used in order to frame the interaction of sovereign states, international organizations, neoliberal ideas, and non-state networks. The work on neoliberal hegemony by a number of geographers (Peet 2003, 2007;

Sparke 2005; Harvey 2005; Peck 2010) and other social scientists (Dezalay and Garth 2002; Ferguson 2006) are also drawn upon extensively. Finally, the theoretical background for this project is influenced by ideas of state and sovereignty developed in political geography and other scholars building off the Foucauldian lineage of theory (Mitchell 1991, 2002; Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Ferguson 1990; Hajer 1995). Before going into very much detail in describing how these bodies of literature relate to the overall project, two of the key terms need to be given some basic definition: hegemony and neoliberalism.

Hegemony is a political concept that emphasizes informal and de facto arrangements of power that exist in addition to or beyond formal legal structures of power. The concept of hegemony has been used in various ways, ranging from its use by the realist school of international relations to describe the balance of power between states to its use by Marxist and Marxist-influenced scholars to describe the balance of power between different socio-economic groups within a state (Sparke 2004, 2005).

Hegemony includes both coercion and persuasion as control mechanisms, but the hegemony is regarded as more successful the less visible the coercive aspect is (Cox 1981: 137). Cox summarizes the relation of coercion and persuasion inherent in hegemony as follows:

> There is an enforcement potential in the material power relations underlying any structure, in that the strong can clobber the weak if they think it necessary. But force will not have to be used in order to ensure the dominance of the strong to the extent that the weak accept the prevailing power relations as legitimate. This the weak may do if the strong… are willing to make concessions that will secure the weak's acquiescence in their leadership and if they can express this leadership in terms of universal or general interest, rather than just serving their own interests (Cox 1981: 137).

The sense in which hegemony is in Cox and in this dissertation emerges from the Gramscian tradition. Gramsci, writing in the 1920s and 1930s, developed a model of class struggle to describe contemporary European politics wherein the dominant class not only maintained power through state military and police apparatuses, but also through institutions and ideology permeating what he called civil society. Subordinate classes were enrolled in this power structure by a combination of implicit physical threat and the provisions of some concessions to their interests, while this order of social relations was promoted though civil society institutions like schools and churches until it was taken for granted and accepted as right and natural (Gramsci 1971).

The term 'Neoliberalism' is often used to describe a set of prevailing orthodoxies in economic policy. Neoliberalism can be thought of as a form of laissez-faire capitalism that seeks to use markets as a form of governance (Jessop 2002; Peck 2004). Neoliberalism can take a variety of forms in different contexts, but as Peck (2004, 395) points out, there are certain "family resemblances" that can be discerned in various local formulations. Jessop (2002, 454) lists several common features of a typical neoliberal economic project: trade liberalization, economic deregulation, privatization of state services, and scrutiny of public welfare spending. The term neoliberalism is rarely used as a self-designation on the part ofits alleged practitioners, and this makes it more difficult to identify it as a coherent, unified project (Peck, Brenner, and Theodore 2009: 96; Barnett 2010). This ambiguity does not prevent it, according to a number of scholars used here, from playing a key role in global hegemonic projects (Jessop 1997; Peet 2003, 2007; Harvey 2005; Hajer 1997).

Policy Transfer

A large set of scholarship exists addressing the process of replicating policies (of any kind, not just of the neoliberal variety) from one government or institution to another. In their foundational paper on the subject, Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) define policy transfer as: "the process by which actors borrow policies developed in one setting to develop programmes and policies within another." Although these authors did not invent the term, their 1996 paper constituted a synthesis of a number of similar and overlapping themes within one conceptual framework (Benson and Jordan 2011, 2012; Prince 2012a).[2] In particular they drew upon Rose's (1991, 1993) work on 'policy learning' and Bennett's (1991) work on 'policy convergence.' The framework which Dolowitz and Marsh proposed was organized around a series of questions, along with typologies or continuums of possible answers. This was expanded and elaborated in a subsequent article (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000: 7- 17) into the following six questions: 1) Why is policy transferred? 2) Who is involved in transfer? 3) What is transferred? 4) From where is it transferred? 5) To what degree is a policy transferred; and 6) What are the constraints upon policy transfer?

In regard to the first question the authors propose a continuum of voluntary borrowing to coercive imposition. For the second question, they provide a typology of actors including officials, bureaucrats, parties, lobbies, and supra-national institutions. Of particular interest to the present study, they emphasis the role that the last category plays in non-voluntary transfers:

> Supra-national institutions often play a key role in coercive policy transfer. For example, supra-national institutions have played a crucial role in the spread of Western monetary policies to Third World countries. International Monetary Fund or World Bank loans are much cheaper for these countries, but in return the IMF will stipulate certain economic policies that have to be implemented if the loan is to be granted (1996: 348).

Here they are speaking of loan conditionalities, but they later expand this to include policies imposed as treaty obligations in multi-government institutions (2000: 13, 15). Here they use the European Union as their example, but the WTO is also based on treaty-obligated policy reforms, as described in chapter 2.

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[2] Dussauge-Laguna (2012) disputes the originality and importance of Dolowitz and Marsh's contribution to the policy transfer literature.

They go on to propose descriptive of typologies for what is transferred – i.e. policy goals, administrative techniques, even ‘negative lessons’ of what policies not to adopt; for the types of entities between which transfer takes place - i.e. between national governments, between municipalities, etc; for the degree to which a policy is transferred – i.e. direct copying, combining elements of polices from multiple sources, adaptation of policies to fit unique contexts, etc; and for the various factors which make a policy difficult or easy to transfer – i.e. complexity, expense, suitability for particular administrative structures. The authors emphasize that this is meant as a conceptual model or heuristic device, not a theory (Marsh and Sharman 2009; Dolowitz and Marsh 2012).

Benson and Jordan (2011) note that policy transfer has evolved since Dolowitz and Marsh’s early work from a ‘niche’ area of study into an auxiliary concept for wider areas of policy analysis, including the literature on neoliberalism. This body of work has been criticized from a number of perspectives. James and Lodge (2003) argue that Dolowitz and Marsh’s model tries to do too much and becomes a hodgepodge of mismatched theory with underspecified variables and little explanatory power. Evans (2009) holds that the policy transfer literature has been too preoccupied with the state scale, and calls for more focus on transnational organizations on non-state actors. Others (Benson and Jordan 2012; Marsh and Sharman 2009) have noted that the literature has been almost entirely focused on policy transfer among developed countries, especially relating the European Union.

According to Marsh and Sharman, the lack of attention to developing countries in policy transfer studies may be attributable in part to the lack until recently of large, easily available national databases for these countries and possibly reluctance among researchers to travel there. They speculate, however, that developing countries would be ideal testing grounds for many of the questions brought up by the policy transfer literature, such as the effectiveness of coercive policy transfer through donor conditionalities, whether or not policies are converging toward a homogenized standard globally, or how well policies developed in advanced economies work in less developed conditions. "For either confirming existing hypotheses or generating new ones, the answers lie disproportionately in the developing world" (Marsh and Sharman 2009: 280- 281)[3]. The present dissertation does examine policy transfer in a developing country and finds that liberal/ neoliberal policy formulas are subject to a great deal of transformation and innovation when they have been adopted in India (see especially chapter 9).

Stone (2000, 2004) has spoken most to lack of focus on non-national, non-state modes of policy transfer. She argues that "methodological nationalism" has led to studies circumscribed by what takes place within official state hierarchies or by comparisons between states, at the expense of "organizations outside and between states" (2004: 549). She further argues that an emphasis on state officials as being the primary agents of policy transfer has overlooked the role of non-state actors such as business and finance professionals, think tank personnel, and members of interest group organizations (550, 555- 559). She also suggests that more attention should be paid to the transfer of normative standards along with policy, such as research metrics and gender roles (552). With regard to international organizations, where others have emphasized the coercive aspect of policy transfer (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996, 2000; Marsh and Sharman 2009), Stone draws our attention to non-coercive, almost 'missionary' policy-promotion activity:

[3] Marsh and Sharman's (2009) article leans through a negative answer to these hypotheses (donor conditionalities are not always implemented or implemented as the donor intends, policies are not becoming globally homogenous, and policies from developed countries often do not work well in developing countries.

> Institutions such as the World Bank, the WTO and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have set up research departments or hold conferences and consultations to advocate the 'scientific' validity of their objectives, and have engaged in various outreach activities, data-gathering and monitoring to promote awareness and educate the public (Stone 2004: 554).

Most of the institutions which I examine in chapter 8 use such mechanisms to promote their agendas and build alliances.

A number of geographers have also borrowed, adapted, and critiqued the concept of policy transfer, although Prince (2012b) argues that 'policy mobilities' is a more apt description of what geographers have done with this subject. In general, geographers have been more attentive to the people participating in policy transfers, the adaptation and mutation of policy moving between different contexts, and transfers involving non-national scales and agencies. Larner and Laurie (2010) suggest that ethnographic methodologies are useful to study policy transfer, in their case engineers involved in the transfer of utility privatization. McCann (2011) argues that the elaborate typologies developed for categories of policy transfer and agents of policy transfer tend to become reified abstractions, "becoming the objects of debate rather than facilitating analyses of the social processes that constitute policy transfer" (111). McCann and Ward (2010, 2012) also argue, in relation to their focus on urban policy, that the preoccupation with the national scale obscures transnational city-to-city circuits of policy transfer. A number of geographers (Peck and Theodore 2001, 2010; McCann 2011; Prince 2012a, 2012b) have emphasized that policy transfers do not often result in carbon-copies of the original policy, but adapt to different contexts, are subject to creative mutations, and hybridize with other policies.

> mobile policies rarely travel as complete "packages," they move in bits and pieces – as selective discourses, inchoate ideas, and synthesized models – and they therefore "arrive" not as replicas but as policies already-in-transformation (Peck and Theodore 2010: 170).

This tendency towards hybridization in the circulation of policy, when applied to the spread of neoliberalism, contributes to the difficulty in identifying a coherent project (Peck, Brenner, and Theodore 2010b).

Neoliberalism in Historical Context

Histories of neoliberalism (here I rely mainly on Dezalay and Garth 2000; Peet 2003; Harvey 2005; and Peck 2010) emphasize that it is a hazy and indistinct cluster of ideas, combining multiple traditions and processes. Friederich von Hayek is usually considered the founder of neoliberalism as a school of thought. In the early to mid-twentieth century, he worked successively in the Austrian School of Economics, the London School of Economics, and the University of Chicago, helping to make these early “centers of influence and persuasion” (Peet 2003: 9) for neoliberalism; he also founded the Mont Pelerin Society in 1947 with a group of like-minded intellectuals, including Milton Friedman. Intellectual neoliberalism, however, remained rather marginal until the decline of Keynesianism (the previously dominant school of economic theory, which preserved a much greater role for government intervention in the economy than neoliberalism) in the 1970s, however. Another important force behind the rise of neoliberalism was the business and especially the finance community, which had never fully accepted Keynesianism and were thus ready to embrace an alternative school of theory more friendly to their interests when the opportunity presented itself (Peet 2003; Dezalay and Garth 2002: 81). Dezalay and Garth (78- 79) also suggest that neoliberal-oriented academics made an early investment in complex mathematical skills that paid off with the rise of computing in business and finance from about the 1960s.

All of these authors (Dezalay and Garth 2000; Peet 2003; Harvey 2005; Peck 2010) emphasize the role of think tanks in the rise of neoliberalism. Groups such as the American

Enterprise Institute, the Cato Institute, and the Heritage Foundation were founded by neoliberal intellectuals and, especially form the 1970s, funded by wealthy business interests. Think tanks allowed "policy entrepreneurs" (Dezalay and Garth: 80) to bypass former academic routes to intellectual legitimacy by selling their ideas directly to the media, providing content for soundbites and pundits for televised debates (79- 80). Harvey sums up this process as a "massive intervention on the part of business elites and financial interests in the production of ideas and ideologies: through investment in think tanks, in training of technocrats, and in the command of the media" (Harvey 2005: 115).

In the 1980s, neoliberalism took off with the election of its proponents to the executive in the United States (Ronald Reagan) and the United Kingdom (Margaret Thatcher). This was accompanied by the increasing influence of neoliberal ideas upon the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, which in turn pressed for the adoption of neoliberal economic policy in developing countries. The IMF had been much quicker to adopt neoliberal principles, while the World Bank was drawn in somewhat later and more reluctantly. The opportunity to impose a neoliberal policy regime globally came about with the third world debt crisis beginning in the early 1980s. In response to this, the IMF and World Bank developed a set of rescue packages collectively called structural adjustment programs (SAPs) which allowed developing country governments to reschedule their loan payments if they adopted certain economic policies, usually involving cuts in social programs, privatization of state-owned enterprises, decontrol of prices, lowering barriers to foreign investment and other free market reforms (see Peet 2003, chapters 3 and 4 for a very detailed analysis of SAPs). This is primarily what Dolowitz and Marsh (1996, 2000, 2012) were speaking of when they discussed non-voluntary transfer.

The top-down mechanism of structural adjustment, however, was not the only means of transferring neoliberal policy to the developing world (and its efficacy in permanently altering policy has been questioned by Stone 2008). Dezalay and Garth describe in detail a more voluntary mechanism of policy transfer whereby students from developing countries are exposed to neoliberal thought while attending US universities and the return to their countries of origin where they subsequently influence economic policy there. The archetypical early example of this was the role of the “Chicago Boys” in the early adoption of neoliberal economic policy in Chile (even before its widespread adoption in the US and UK). In this case, a group of Chilean economists were trained at the University of Chicago (one of the early intellectual centers of neoliberalism) and were subsequently empowered by the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile in implement their theories in economic policy. Dezalay and Garth document similar processes of intellectual diffusion occurring in other Latin American countries. The present dissertation finds that the adoption of liberalization policies in India resembles much more closely a voluntary model of policy transfer similar to that described by Dezalay and Garth rather than the top-down, involuntary policy imposition of structural adjustment.

The 1990s was in many ways the height of neoliberalism internationally, the period of what is often called the ‘Washington Consensus.’ The fall of the Soviet Union, the rollback of the welfare state in the United States in Europe, and economic liberalization in China and India (Ahmed 2009) all combined to remove or weaken resistance to neoliberalization trends. Brenner, Peck, and Theodore (2010a: 337- 339) compare global neoliberalism in the 1980s to 1990s in terms of transition from “inter-jurisdictional policy transfer,” where the IMF and World Bank conducted their SAP experiments on developing countries, to the consolidation of a “genuinely post-Keynesian, neoliberalized rules regime,” where the essential features of SAPs became embodied in more permanent supranational treaty organizations like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the WTO.

Starting in the late 1990s, a series of crises led to cracks appearing in the Washington Consensus. The IMF handling of the Southeast Asian economic meltdown in 1997- 1998 led to criticism of neoliberal orthodoxy from relatively mainstream voices (Choven and Babb 2009; Stiglitz 2002). The huge protests of the WTO in Seattle in 1999 brought anti-globalization movements to wider public attention. US unilateralism in the Iraq invasion of 2003 left the chief national proponent of the Washington Consensus more diplomatically isolated. And finally, the worldwide economic crises of 2008 led to speculation that neoliberal economic policy might once and for all be discredited (Choven and Babb 2009; Stiglitz 2008; Krugman 2009).

According to Peck and Theodore (2012), however, "Most observers now agree that those reports of the death of neoliberalism, excitedly issued in the midst of the Wall Street crash of 2008, were exaggerated." Three earlier papers written by these two authors along with Brenner suggest a few hypotheses to account for the resilience of neoliberalism in the face of this recent crisis. The most explicit one laid out by the authors is that the rise of neoliberalism in the first place was enabled by crises, thus a crisis is in many ways its forte. "On their own, crisis conditions will never be enough [to end neoliberalism], not least because the tools of neoliberal governance were forged in, and precisely for, such conditions" (Peck, Brenner, and Theodore 2009: 110). They elaborate on this more in a subsequent paper:

> Ironically, the chronic 'underperformance' of neoliberal strategies has been a source of forward momentum for the project as a whole… neoliberal strategies frequently postpone or displace crisis pressures, instilling an insatiable need for 'next stage' reforms (Peck, Brenner, and Theodore 2010b: 209- 210).

On another level, the international rules regimes that they describe, including the WTO, are entrenched and difficult to reform or dismantle. They use the colorful phrase "zombie neoliberalism" for the scenario for this regime to continue to lumber forward under its own inertia even as its intellectual foundations are undermined (Peck, Brenner, and Theodore 2010b: 340- 341).

Interestingly, the lack of *internal* theoretical cohesion to neoliberal projects may explain some of neoliberalism's resiliency. Neoliberalism is "Largely a critics' term" (Peck, Brenner, and Theodore 2009: 96), not generally used by ostensive 'neoliberals' to describe themselves. It is therefore difficult to assign blame for the crisis to 'neoliberalism' when there are no self-identified neoliberals to point to. Specific neoliberal movements like supply-side economics and monetarism can be isolated and criticized more easily than the amorphous, technocratic 'common sense' that informs them. "Neoliberalism" is never mentioned in the hundreds of pages of WTO documents analyzed in chapters 5- 7 of this dissertation, yet they are filled (especially in documents attributed to the WTO Secretariat) with specific policy prescriptions (privatization, cuts in social programs, deregulation, tariff and subsidy reduction, etc.) which would elsewhere be described as neoliberal (WTO 1998a, 2002a, and 2007a). They do not appeal to a specific body of theory to justify their policy advice, merely a sense that this advice is based on obvious, uncontroversial economic principles.

One of the key strengths of neoliberalism, according to Peck, Brenner, and Theodore (2010b: 210) is ability to constantly restructure itself in response to crisis, to solve a crisis which it caused by pulling another reform out of the same grab bag of ideas. Peet (2003: 97- 100) gives an example of one approach to policy failure in his chapter on the IMF, which seems to illustrate this process. After the disasters associated with structural adjustment programs became apparent in the 1990s, IMF economists concluded that they had not worked as expected because there was too little civil society involvement in their implementation. They thus came up with a new version of conditionalities in 1999 with essentially the same content as the old SAPs, but with provisions for limited civil society consultations and renamed it "Poverty

Reduction and Growth Facilities." In this example, policy failure was explained as a defect in a few implementation details of a program, not as in the overarching principles conditioning the program (privatization, deregulation, trade liberalization, etc.). The proposed solution was thus merely a slightly modified version of the original program.[4]

A similar tactic that became clear in the course of this research is the claim that previous applications of neoliberal policy did not work precisely because of the adaptations of policy prescriptions to local contexts (in this case, India) were not faithful interpretations of the original doctrine. The policy failed not because the advice was wrong, but because it was not implemented faithfully enough. This form of argumentation is prominent in the three Secretariat Reports analyzed in chapters 6 and 7 of this dissertation.

Harvey (2005, 2007) suggests that neoliberalism can be best understood as two distinct but overlapping phenomena. First, it is a school of thought based a set of moral-philosophical principles. Second, it is a political project aimed at strengthening the capitalist class. The relationship between the former and the latter is the utility of the philosophy to the project. The philosophical component tends to highlight metrics and facts that support the project (they promote measures that tend to strengthen business interests) and systematically discount and obscure metrics and facts unfavorable to the project (options more favorable to the working classes). Though the two overlap, they also sometimes contradict each other. Where this is the case, where the philosophy cannot be easily fit into the project, a legion of rhetorical expertise is available to rationalize the logical disconnects. Think tanks play an important role in this process.

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[4] Such a story also brings to mind the idea of *trasformismo* in Cox's model of hegemony described below, where a potentially counter-hegemonic idea, in this case civil society consultation, in coopted and domesticated by the dominant hegemonic structure (Cox 1983: 167, 173).

Sparke (2005) uses the term 'geoeconomics' to describe a political discourse that promotes neoliberal globalization and a corresponding set of institutions and practices that serve to reinforce it, including a "whole set educational, cultural, financial, and legal practices, ranging from academic curricula to dominant tropes of global advertising, to management consultancy, to investment guides and ratings, and to interstate negotiations of free trade agreements" (Sparke 2003: 379). He emphasizes the role of discourse in hegemony by suggesting that globalist geoeconomics serves to discursively obscure the material workings of power relations by making them appear natural or as articles of common sense.

Neo-Gramscian Hegemony and International Institutions

In trying to understand the workings of power in a global, multistate organization like the WTO, I have found the work of Robert Cox and other Neo-Gramscian theorists (Cox 1981, 1983, 1992; Gale 1998; Bieler and Morton 2004) useful. These scholars have developed a theoretical framework for understanding hegemony on a global scale without taking states as the only primary actors. This school of thought proposes that global social forces and international institutions are equally important in creating and maintaining what Cox calls "world orders," or "historically specific configuration of power" (Cox 1992: 161). Gale (1998: 273) argues that previous models of international relations were too state-centric, while Marxist-derived critical theories tend to treat international institutions as mere functional derivatives of capitalism. "Dominant states achieve hegemony not only by possessing a preponderance of military and economic power, but also by the legitimizing effects of a dominant ideology and the construction of international institutionalization" (Gale 1998: 275).

Cox's schematic of hegemony consists of three overlapping and mutually conditioning components: material capabilities, ideas, and institutions. Cox defines material capabilities as "productive and destructive potentials," i.e. economic and military power. This is associated with the coercive mechanism underlying hegemony. Cox divides ideas about social relations prevailing at a particular time and place into two general categories. "Intersubjective ideas" are those which are taken for granted, while "collective images" are open to contestation by competing interests. "Whereas intersubjective meanings… constitute the common ground of social discourse (including conflict), collective images may be several and opposed" (Cox 1981: 136). Institutions reinforce the power potential of material capabilities and "tend, at least initially, to encourage collective images consistent with these power relations" (136).

The model of international hegemony proposed by Cox adopted a number of insights from Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* (1971) and is for that reason often called Neo-Gramscian. Cox saw something similar to Gramsci's model going on the power relations among sovereign states, although his model does not merely replace Gramsci's classes with states.

> The hegemonic concept of world order is founded not only upon the regulation of interstate conflict but also upon a globally-conceived civil society, *i.e.*, a mode of production of global extent which brings about links among social classes of the countries encompassed by it (Cox 1983: 171).

Cox is particularly interested in the role of institutions in Gramsci's model of hegemony. Although he was writing many years before the WTO was formed, this model of institutional behavior remains apt in describing the workings of this body.

> There is a close connection between institutionalisation and what Gramsci called hegemony. Institutions provide ways of dealing with internal conflicts so as to minimise the use of force… [They] may become the anchors for such a hegemonic strategy, since they lend themselves both to the representation of diverse interests and to the universalisation of policy (Cox 1981: 137).

Cox followed this by noting, “Hegemony cannot, however, be reduced to an institutional dimension… They may be an expression of hegemony but cannot be taken as identical to hegemony” (*ibid*). Cox saw institutionalization partly as a means for a hegemon to perpetuate its power beyond the time at which the material and/ or ideological basis for its power had faded. On the other hand, he also described institutions as taking on “their own life” (136) and behaving in ways that its creators had not intended. Therefore, an institution created under a hegemonic order could later become one of the arenas in which that order was contested.

Although Cox allowed for the possibility of an institution being turned against the hegemonic order that created it, he saw little potential for developing countries to do so with contemporary international organizations because “these superstructures are inadequately connected to any popular political base” in these countries (*ibid*). Cox here had in mind existing international organizations like the IMF and World Bank. Some of the more recent scholars building upon Cox’s work have shown more optimism about the possibility of counter-hegemony within the WTO, as it has a much more democratic decision-making infrastructure than the IMF or World Bank. Choven (2005) makes the most optimistic version of this argument, noting how developing countries in the WTO have successfully turned the tables on the Quad during the Doha Round and that even the dispute settlement mechanism has been used successfully against the United States and the European Union. Other scholars are less optimistic, and detail ways in which the United States and the European Union are able to subvert the consensus mechanism and turn it to their advantage, while simultaneously enjoying the increased legitimacy that the consensus mechanism provides (Chimni 2006; Steinberg 2002; Kwa and Jawari 2004; Peet 2003). Steinberg (2002: 342) refers to the deliberation process in the WTO as “organized hypocrisy.”

Cox (1983: 165- 167) borrowed another concept from Gramsci, *passive revolution*, to describe a situation of incomplete hegemony. This can be also be used describe a zone of transition on the edges of a successful hegemony where the hegemonic power exercises strong influence without the firm institutionalized power it enjoys in its center. In this zone, ideas and institutions are copied and imported from more successful hegemonic orders, without however displacing the power of the previous local elites. Gramsci saw this mechanism at work in 19th century Italy where northern industrial elites secured the cooperation of older agrarian elites in the south (Gramsci 1971: 57- 59). Cox saw it at work in industrializing third world countries in late 20th century, where "military-bureaucratic" regimes "try to incorporate elements from the hegemonic model [of the United States and other developed countries] without disturbing old power structures" (Cox 1983: 171).

A subsidiary concept of passive revolution is *trasformismo*, which Gramsci used to describe alliances more makeshift alliances between a dominant and subordinate class than exists in a true hegemony. According to Cox, "*trasformismo* worked to co-opt leaders of subaltern groups" and was therefore a means of "assimilating and domesticating potentially dangerous ideas by adjusting them to the policies of the dominant coalition" (166- 167). He applied this concept to contemporary international institutions thusly:

> Elite talent from peripheral countries is co-opted into international institutions in the manner of *trasformismo*. Individuals from peripheral countries, though they may come to international institutions with the idea of working from within to change the system, are condemned to work within the structures of passive revolution… *Trasformismo* also absorbs potentially counter-hegemonic ideas and makes these ideas consistent with hegemonic doctrine (173).

This sort of process fits with the more pessimistic interpretations of WTO democracy described above. Especially in the Doha Round of negotiations, the WTO has taken on a number of issues of interest to developing countries into the negotiating agenda, but none of these are seriously at odds with the overall neoliberal orientation of the organization (Steinberg 2002; Chimni 2006; Das 2006; Choven 2005; Lee and Smith 2008; Choven and Babb 2009; Efstathopoulos 2012).

Long before globalization became a buzzword, Cox described processes that transcended state boundaries, particularly what he called the “internationalization of the state” whereby some of the machinery of state government is displaced to international institutions and the “internationalization of production,” where different stages of capitalist production processes were carried out in different countries (Cox 1981: 144- 147). Cox viewed the rise of international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank as part of the internationalization of the state under what he called *pax americana*.

> Such an internationalised policy process presupposed a power structure, one in which central agencies of the US government were in a dominant position. But it is not necessarily an entirely hierarchical power structure with lines of force running exclusively from the top down, nor was it one in which the units of interaction were whole nation-states. It was a power structure seeking to maintain consensus through bargaining power and one in which the bargaining units were fragments of states (Cox 1981: 145).

Cox describes *pax americana* in the past tense because he saw the United States as a declining hegemon and he speculated that a new non-hegemonic period was beginning, at least on the ‘world order’ scale (Cox 1983: 170; 1992: 179- 180). However, others have seen the period of American decline more as an era in which the basis of American hegemony was transformed from one based on early Keynesian-oriented models to one based on neoliberalism (Choven and Babb 2009: 470; Peet 2003; Harvey 2005; Agnew 2005). Whether or not the current ‘world order’ constitutes a genuine hegemony or something more akin to Cox/ Gramsci’s passive revolution, however, similar ideas of hegemonic processes apply. It may be useful then, to think of hegemony as more of a process than an outcome, in that Cox’s insights apply whether or not the current world order is hegemonic or non-hegemonic.[5] Cox in any case may have been caught too much upon the model as hegemony as state-based which he was trying to escape, seeing the dominance of one state as a necessary component for a genuinely hegemonic world order.

One hypothesis which suggests itself about the WTO, based on Cox's institutional model, is that it is a mechanism put in place by a declining hegemon (the United States) to bolster its power even as the material basis for that power was declining. Chang (2003) argues that in general the argument for free trade tends to support the position of already-established economic powers, so the latter will tend to embrace and promote free-trade ideology (of which Neoliberalism is a recent variant). According to Chang, almost all developed countries (including the United Kingdom, the United States, and Japan) went through a period of protectionism, when they initially caught up with the advanced industrial economies of their times. This was crucial to their initial economic growth. Robert Hunter Wade (2003) expands Chang's ideas to the specific circumstances of the WTO. By outlawing protectionist economic policies via the WTO, established industrial powers take away the main means of development from poor countries and thus limit their trade competition. He argues that most of the WTO agreements have heavily favored rich countries at the expense of poor countries. They have forced the latter to abandon independent industrialization by disallowing the protection of manufacturing, they have prevented them from copying rich country technology without paying for the rights to 'intellectual property,' and they have pried open their capital markets to foreign banks and currency speculators.

[5] Cox (1992: 180) uses the term 'post-hegemonic' as opposed to 'non-hegemonic' to describe a possible future world order without hegemonic power mechanisms or "order without dominance"

Choven (2005) makes a similar argument, although they go on to argue that the this attempt may have backfired upon the United States as it encountered more formidable than expected bargaining capacity among developing country coalitions in the WTO. This sort of process, however, is also accounted for in Cox's model, where institutions once established have a life of their own and may escape the intentionality of their creators or even turned against them. Something like this can be seen as happening in 2003 in Cancun. Brazil, India, and other developing countries took advantage of the consensus-based governing rules of the WTO, used up until that point to the advantage of the Quad, to shift the balance of power in their favor (Choven 2005, Esthatopous 2012).

Although Cox makes frequent use of the term 'structure' to describe the social orders of hegemony, he explicitly rejects what he calls Structural Marxism with its "ahistorical, essentialist epistemology" (Cox 1981: 133). He calls himself a historical materialist and insists that the structures he describes are contingent and historically specific, not universal, eternal abstractions. Bieler and Morton (2004: 89- 90) argue the Coxian concepts of state, class, and other objects of analysis are historically contingent and contextually-dependent, while production is understood not in narrow economic terms, but as "the production and reproduction of knowledge and social relations, morals and institutions that are prerequisites to the production of physical goods" (Cox 1989: 39, quoted in Beiler and Morton 2004: 89).

Hegemony and Discourse

Foucauldian ideas of discourse, which emphasize the relations between the production of knowledge and the exercise of power (Foucault 1972, 1982) lend themselves well to theories of hegemony. Some theorists, building on Foucault's work, have attempted to bring hegemony and discourse more explicitly within the same theoretical framework. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) adapt hegemony to post-structuralism by getting rid of essentialist class categories and economic mono-determinism. Instead, they adopt Foucault's notion of discursive formations to replace the traditional Marxist class categories. They take this further than Foucault by insisting that all practices are discursive practices.

Laclau and Mouffe's discursive formations are internally structured by regular, logical relationships and meanings, and are anchored in place only by artificial 'nodal points' (rather than iron laws of historical necessity). Nodal points are points of reference which help define (to partially fix) the objects (including subject positions) in a discursive formation. Laclau and Mouffe refer to the creation of nodal points as *articulation*. This fixation can be more or less successful, but it can never be entirely complete in the presence of competing discourses. An important point is that discourses can never be entirely closed systems; they are always open to interference from other, overlapping discourses; 'outside' discourses can destabilize partially fixed subject positions, thus creating *antagonism*. Hegemonic politics is created by the convergence of articulation and antagonism. Hegemony occurs when a new nodal point is created in an attempt to resolve some antagonism; it unites, however tenuously, conflicting discourses by establishing chains of equivalent meaning between their objects (Laclau and Mouffe 1985). According to Hajer (1995: 60- 61), discourse achieves hegemony when: 1) an actor is required to draw upon it to achieve credibility (discursive structuration); and 2) it becomes the basis for an institutional arrangement (discursive institutionalization). According to these criteria, it could be argued that neoliberalism has become a globally hegemonic discourse. Economic policy-makers gain credibility by praising the free market and institutional arrangements like the WTO enforce neoliberal principals with legal force.

State and Sovereignty

This work touches on state theory from a few different angles. The Indian state itself is both an arena and a meta-actor in the sphere of agricultural trade policy. We look at it both internally, in terms of the politics of policy formation within India, and externally, as one state interacting with other states in the negotiating forums of the WTO. And we must also look at, following Sparke (2005), networks of discourse, material, and power, which do not stay within the internal-external boundaries, but cross them; and which may exist somewhat autonomously of states, but be interlinked and interdependent with them in various ways. The WTO (and similar intergovernmental bodies) itself presents a challenge to state theory. It has many state-like characteristics, it is 'made up' of states, but it lacks the essential features of a territory or a military.

Political geographers, especially in the last two decades, have sought to reconceptualize political power in ways that go beyond traditional models of the nation state (for example Taylor 1994; Painter 1995: Brenner, et al 2003; Agnew 1994, 2005; Sparke 2003, 2004, 2005; Swyngedouw 1997). This work stresses that the traditional Westphalian notion of the nation-state, with its more or less exact correspondence between sovereignty and territory, was and is a historically-contingent state form and certainly not the only way to arrange political power (Agnew 2005; Painter 1995). Partly this was a response to the contemporary circumstance of globalization, where the nation state no longer seemed adequate to contain many of the political processes being observed. Peck writes:

> many of the naturalized domains and normalized routines of the state have been called into question by, inter alia, the expanding reach of multilateral institutions, the ascendancy of corporate globalism, the deepening of transnational networking, the downwarding of risk and responsibility, the shift from government to governance, and neoliberal autocritiques of inherited (national) state practices. These developments have confounded and confused extant understandings of state spatiality, as clean lines

> that were once imagined to exist between, say, the nation state and the offshore world, bureaucracy and civil society, and the local and the global have become increasingly blurred and porous. (Peck 2004: 397).

This is not to say, however, that states ever had been an ideal Westphalian form prior to contemporary globalization. “In no case... has the authority of the state ever been complete. There have always been competing sources of authority, from the church in the medieval context to international organizations, social movements, businesses, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) today” (Agnew 2005: 442). Painter (1995: 34) argues that “there can be no detailed definition of the state which is both transhistorical (valid throughout time) and applicable to the wide variety of social forms which have been understood to be states in different historical and geographic settings.” He proposes the idea of ‘quasi-states’ for arrangements that function like states in many respects, but do not necessarily claim statehood. These may include crime families, the United Nations, monastic orders, and other objects with state-like qualities. This concept is useful to theorize bodies like the UN or the WTO that make and enforce laws, but do not directly claim territory.

Agnew (2005) in particular argues for the disentanglement of the concepts of territory and sovereignty. He asserts that theories of sovereignty (the exercise of political authority) have been hampered by the expectation that sovereignty must line up with territory. He points out numerous exceptions to the rule of ‘one territory, one sovereignty’ in the contemporary world, from the EU to the West Bank. Such exceptions multiply when one considers the de facto exercise of sovereignty rather than just its formal status. Many states that are independent on paper are in practice dominated by stronger states (say, Haiti in relation to the United States), or by non-state actors. An important qualification in Agnew’s argument is that non-territorial does not mean non-spatial; power networks may be complex and globe-spanning, but they are always anchored in specific spaces. “Sovereignty - the socially constructed practices of political authority - may be exercised non-territorially or in scattered pockets connected by flows across space-spanning networks, ... [but] all forms of polity... occupy some sort of space" (441). Sovereignty exercised non-territorially is still spatial.

This body of political geography is partially rooted in Foucauldian ideas of power. Foucault viewed power as embodied in practice and existing only in action (Foucault 1994: 326-348). He argued against economism in conceptions of power, against the idea that power is a concrete object that can be given, taken, and exchanged (Foucault 2003: 13- 14). Power may appear to be simply held or "owned" by a person or group, but in reality power must be maintained through constant practice. Power is not exchanged in one discrete exchange like a contract. For a power relation to exist, power must be surrendered *continuously*. In other words, power must do a lot more work day-to-day to maintain itself than it might appear and part of this work is making most of the work invisible.

This view of power has implications for theorizing the state and sovereignty. Power relations can be arranged in a hierarchical form with an apex, but "the summit and the lower elements of the hierarchy stand in a relationship of mutual support and conditioning, a mutual 'hold' (power as mutual and indefinite 'blackmail')" (Foucault 1980, 159). The apex may be the most visible part of a structure, but it is not necessarily the most "powerful." State power does not originate from some central point of sovereignty and is not stored there. Power flows through the state rather than from it. "The State, no more probably today than at any other time in its history, does not have this unity, this individuality, this rigorous functionality, nor, to speak frankly this importance" (Foucault 1991, 103).

In deemphasizing the state, Foucault draws attention to other ensembles of social power relations that relate to state, but are much less subservient to it than they might appear. "the State, for all the omnipotence of its apparatuses, is far from being able to occupy the whole field of actual power relations" (1980: 122) Foucault describes the state almost as a sort of second-order effect resulting from the interaction of other power networks, a "meta-power" which "can only operate on the basis of other, already existing power relations" and "consists in the codification of a whole number of power relations that render its functioning possible" (*ibid*). The Foucauldian state is a metapower derived from and dependent on various other power relations. It derives its staying power partly from the fact that it is a convenient reference point to sort out and balance other power relations. It is not difficult to extend this model to a multistate organization like the WTO. In this case, the WTO "quasi-state" (to borrow Painter's term) would be a third-order effect resulting from the interaction of states themselves, codifying the relations among them.

Timothy Mitchell (1988, 1991) builds on Foucault, but gives a bit more prominence to the potential of state power. He conceives of the state as metaphysical abstraction spread to individual subjects through specific embodied practices. The fact that this abstraction is so widely shared, however, is itself generative of power, creating what Mitchell calls the 'state effect.' Here, the interesting thing about the state is not where it begins and ends, but how this abstraction comes to be shared and how this in of itself produces/ reproduces power relationships.

Ferguson and Gupta (2002) also conceptualize the state as a shared abstraction created by social practices, which they describe as creating an imaginary space of "vertical encompassment." Encompassment indicates the state imagined as a hierarchy of containers – state containing regions containing communities containing families, etc; while verticality is a spatial metaphor for authority – the state not only contains the local community, it is 'above' the community. They propose that global governance bodies can be incorporated into this state imaginary, rather than disrupting it. Vertical encompassment is 'stretched' to add a new top level to the nested scalar hierarchy. This does not necessarily amount to a weakening of traditional nation states: "The central effect of the new forms of transnational governmentality is not so much to make states weak (or strong), as to reconfigure states' abilities to spatialize their authority and to stake their claims to superior generality and universality" (123).

One of the theoretical problems faced by research of this sort is whether, and to what extent, to treat the state as 'unified actor' with interests, motivations, and intentions akin to that we might ascribe to a person. James Ferguson warns against this in *The Anti-Politics Machine* (1994 [1990], 60-62; 282-283) against taking states as unified, individual actors. He argues that by locating economic problematics on the scale of the nation one "avoids the formulation of any issue, problem, or program for action based on entities other than the state, effectively excluding from the field of view both conflicts within the nation and forces which transcend it" (62). Ferguson (282) suggests that the first thing we should ask when confronted with a question like 'what should country X do?' is to answer 'who in country X?' When we explore the archival material for India's Trade Policy Reviews in chapters 5- 7, it will be seen that the representatives of member states are often spoken of in the Meeting Reports as personifying the country in question. It was difficult at times not to use this shorthand in my own analysis, not to just say "India wanted X" instead of the 'representative of India' or the 'government of India' when discussing issues on a macro international level.

In this dissertation, I avoid representing states as sealed, monolithic entities with a rigid set of interests and desires. For all of this fuzziness and contingency, however, states are regarded as real objects, even actors, for the purposes of this work. How can we consider an arena where groups of actors with sometimes diametrically opposed agendas to itself be an actor? Partly for the same reason we can consider an individual human being, with all of their internal conflicts and competing desires to be an actor. This analogy can only be taken so far, of course. I will use the term ‘meta-agency’ to describe a large group of people and objects acting in unison for a specific set of purposes (and with varying degrees of voluntarism), such as performing state functions (such as voting, obeying laws, or reporting deviations).

Conclusion

This dissertation contributes to the political geography by examining policy arguments arising in the fuzzy areas of overlapping sovereignty where national state interacts with international organization. As a study of how power works in the WTO, it provides a case study of the working of overlapping sovereignty where law created in a multilateral institution must then be implemented in individual states. If the WTO was created partly as a mechanism to prop up the power of declining hegemons, as in Wade’s (2003) interpretation of Chang’s (2003) “kicking away the ladder” thesis, then it has also proven to be a forum where they hegemons can be challenged (whether or not successfully remains to be seen).

With regard to the policy transfer literature, this dissertation answers Marsh and Sharman’s call to examine policy transfer in a developing state. It supports the case made especially by geographers working in the policy mobilities literature (Prince 2012a, 2012b; Ward and McCann 2010; Peck and Theodore 2012) that policy transfer, especially in regard to neoliberalism, is piecemeal, bidirectional, and subject to local innovation. This study also reveals something about how neoliberal discourse works within the power structure of the WTO. Neoliberalism is never mentioned as a coherent body of thought in the Secretariat Reports analyzed in chapters 5- 7, but rather is presented ‘unlabeled’ as simply a set of technocratic common sense. It is recognized as in Brenner, Peck, and Theodore (2009, 2010a, 2010b) that neoliberalism is fragmented, not often self-identified, and subject to great local variation. It is argued, however, that these very features contribute to its expansiveness as especially to its staying power in the face of failure.

Within the specific context of India, at least, the transfer of neoliberal policy is indeed subject to the adaptation to unique local, country-specific circumstances. Indeed, taken in isolation it is difficult to see how the watered-down, piecemeal, and often unorthodox application of neoliberal policy advice in India can be in any way described as 'neoliberal.' There is no question that the policies pushed by the WTO Secretariat fit the description of neoliberalism (chapter 6 especially demonstrates this), but the selective liberalization that India has undergone, which retains extensive regulation, government transfer payments, even price controls does not resemble any description of neoliberalism with which I am familiar. It can be argued, however, as in Harvey (2005) has in the case of liberalization in China, that liberalization in India is mutually dependent on the rise of neoliberal discourse globally. This question will be revisited in the concluding arguments of the dissertation in chapter 9.

Although the very early intellectual centers of neoliberalism were located in developed countries, neoliberalism is not simply a matter of diffusion from developed to developing countries. Dezalay and Garth (2002) note that neoliberal policy was adopted in earlier in Chile than in the United States or United Kingdom, while Peck et al (2009) emphasize that developing countries were often involuntary laboratories for early experiments in structural adjustment. Even aside from this however, it is obvious especially from the heated arguments in the India's Trade Policy Review meeting, that neoliberal policy was only ever selectively adopted in developed countries. A good example of this is the persistence of highly protected and intervened-upon agricultural markets in the United States and Europe. The association of neoliberal policy with powerful developed countries seems to have much more to do with the rhetoric of their representatives – certainly in the context of advice and criticism given during the Indian TPRs - than with actual practice.

Chapter 8 of this dissertation, especially, takes on the recommendation of geographers engaged in the policy transfer literature to pay more attention to the specificity of policy movement, including specific institutional sites, material channels of information flow, and individuals embodying policy knowledge (Larner and Laurie 2010; Prince 2010 and 2012; Peck and Theodore 2012). This is in part a corrective for the emphasis on archival documents in the three preceding chapters, or a way to look at the same process from a different angle.

Finally, I want to emphasize that this dissertation is first and foremost an empirical study. It is hoped that the descriptions and observations presented here are valuable in of themselves, regardless of whether one agrees with my interpretations.

Chapter 4: Methods

This chapter will discuss the overall methodological framework of the project, approaches to the specific methods used, and the experiences and problems that accompanied them. The analytic framework used in the research on which this dissertation reports generally emerges from the Foucauldian tradition, but is also informed by other compatible analytic models, specifically Policy Epistemics (Fischer 2003, 2009), and Relational Biography (Dezalay and Garth 2002). Discourse, or more precisely discursive formation, is understood here to include not only statements themselves, but also the material and institutional contexts and relationships of power in which the statement is produced. The objects of research, as noted in the introduction (chapter 1), were three overlapping discursive arenas: WTO space, Indian state space, and policy expert space. Practically these discourses were accessed through two sets of data: archival records available via the WTO web site and the content of 26 semi-structured interviews with officials and policy experts in India.

The archival portion of the research focused on nine documents associated with India's three Trade Policy Reviews. Each of these Reviews produced a Secretariat Report, a Government Report, and Meeting Minutes. Chapters 5- 7 contain a detailed discourse analysis of these documents. The interviews were undertaken during two periods of field research in Delhi, the first in October 2008 to January 2009 and the second from September to December 2010. These are analyzed in chapter 8.

Framework for Discourse Analysis

The method of discourse analysis was most explicitly laid out by Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge (AoK)* in 1972. Discourse here is understood as a distribution of statements, but this approach is specifically interested not so much in the statements themselves as the conditions which caused/ allowed them to exist, what Foucault calls the 'rules of formation.' These are rooted in materiality and temporality, and in the context of social power relations. Specifically, *AoK* enumerates four overlapping systems of formation/ transformation contributing to a discourse, including: objects, enunciative modalities, concepts, and strategic options. Objects are what the discourse refers to, and are formed and reformed within the discourse. Enunciative modes, or statement style, concerns who speaks, from where, with what authority, and under what conditions. Concepts, in Foucault's terms, are the relations of coexistence among statements, i.e. the framework in which statements related to each other (their order, interdependencies, etc.). Finally, strategy or theme concerns how different possible options produced by the discourse are decided upon, generally on the basis of relations with other discursive formations or social practices (such as the functional role a discourse fulfills in society or the desire for knowledge that some other discursive formation generates).

Policy Epistemics

A form of discourse analysis known as Policy Epistemics was used extensively in this project. This approach was developed by Fischer (2000) for the study of inter-discursive articulation among different communities and the effects such relationships have on policy-making. The units of analysis are 'fields of argument' - public controversies or political disputes - and the policy networks that form around them. Policy Epistemics concerns itself with

> The movement and uses of information, the social assumptions embedded in research design, the specific relationship of different types of information to decision-making, the different ways arguments move across different disciplines and discourses, and the

> translation of knowledge from one discursive community to another, and the interrelations between discourses and institutions (256).

It concerns not only active policy-makers in administrative roles, but any group, such as expert communities, or activist citizens, and local stakeholders, concerned with the debate.

India's relationships with the WTO and its policy implications for agriculture constitute a set of public controversies involving a variety of policy networks and discursive communities. This constitutes a 'field of argument' in Fischer's terms. This field is cross-articulated in WTO negotiations, Indian government strategy, and within the discursive community of Indian policy expertise, as well as in the media, stakeholder forums, and other areas. Policy Epistemics calls on us to examine how understandings and agendas are transferred among these different fields of argument, especially where different frames of reference must be accommodated or complicated technical explanations simplified into more general stories or metaphors.

Discursive Matrix

Discursive elements that will be analyzed in this project include: the construction of important objects and actors; the perceived logical dependencies among them; how the various fields of competence and intervention are discursively delimited; what authorities are referenced or claimed by the speaker; what stories (hypothetical or actual) are used to demonstrate rhetorical points; normative measures used; absent references (perhaps terms that are consciously avoided or replaced with euphemisms) and systematic exclusions (for instance issues claimed to be outside of the speakers area of competence or responsibility); and uncontested assumptions (especially those appearing in otherwise antagonistic discourses).

To further specify these elements: Objects are constructed through classificatory categories used to divide up and make sense of reality. Actors are objects that are ascribed agency, that have intentions and act on them. Constructing actors involves the shorthand terms used in arguments to ascribe agency. Often complex articulations of political agency are described as a single actor as a discursive shorthand to simplify reality, what are termed here as group actors. For example, states are often described as actors, as discrete units with more or less unified intentionality (notably in statements about trade). The ambiguity of such constructions (are we talking about the people of this country or the government or something else?) can in some cases be a rhetorical asset. Similar unified intentionality can be ascribed to classes, political groupings, economic sectors, etc. The distinction between actors and other objects is often blurred, as with objects, such as 'the weather' or 'the market', which are conceived as acting autonomously according to their own logical system, but not as having intention.

Systematic dependencies among objects and actors can range from complex theoretical frameworks to common sense cause-and-effect relationships. Larger and more general arguments are often connected to more specific arguments. Connections can be hypothesized between a specific argument and a more general trope by the things it takes as a given. For instance, in mainstream arguments about 'development,' varied arguments can be made that diametrically oppose one another in many respects, but which all take it as a given that the main goal of Indian economic policy is to strive toward an economy that more closely resembles those of the 'advanced' industrial countries.

Stories or tropes and metaphors are often deployed and reproduced through discourses and often serve as a translation mechanism between different discourses. Some tropes fall somewhat to the side of the specific argument, but have to be mentioned at least in passing, if only to neutralize them. Logics referred to only to neutralize them reveal something about current discursive conflicts. It is a sign of neoliberal hegemony when arguments which eschews neoliberal logic are compelled to assert in passing the limitations of this logic. Other arguments may mention a larger conventional argumentative trope in order to establish an exception. Such tactics are very prevalent in statements concerning agriculture, where commentators who otherwise subscribe to free market arguments must explain why ‘normal’ market conditions (and the normative prescriptions that would follow) do not apply to the ‘special’ conditions of the agricultural market (Dixon and Hapke 2003). Different normative measures often lead to contrary arguments. For example, measuring poverty by per capita income might give the impression that poverty is declining in India, while using a proxy like per capita daily absorption of food grain may indicate that it is increasing.

Fields of intervention include what a discourse can describe legibly and conceive of as amenable to action. Objects may be excluded from actionability by limits a discourse sets on its area of competency, what objects and processes it ascribes rights and responsibilities to act on, and simply by notions of what is possible. Such limits are often unstable and fields of intervention can overlap between discourses (for example where regulatory policy must consult expert scientific communities). Often the boundaries of a field of intervention will be marked by qualifiers of official status and competence, such as claims for speaking on behalf of a larger group or, conversely by qualifiers indicating a personal remark or indicating incompetence to set a boundary marker to the field (i.e. “but I am not qualified to comment on this particular issue” or “but this observation is purely anecdotal”). Some of these common elements of discourse are described in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Selected common discursive elements and their significance

Selected common discursive elements and their significance	
Discursive Elements	**Significance**
Objects	Classificatory constructions
Actors	Objects that act intentionally or at least with systematic logic
Group Actors	Actor-objects pictured as having unified intentionality for certain purposes, even though they stand in for large complexes of people, things, and processes (i.e. states)
Systems	Functional dependencies among objects, actors, and processes
Tropes	Stories and metaphors systematically related to rhetorical points
Normative Measures	Metrics used judge
Fields of competence and Intervention	Field of objects defined by a discourse as amenable to manipulation
Mark of official or unofficial statements	Statements containing indications of whether or not they claim to express the position of a larger group than the speaker themselves.
Authorities referenced	Sources of legitimation used to back up claims
Absent References	Terms and concepts generally avoided or unrecognizable in a particular discourse
Systematic exclusions	Areas typically avoided as objects of intervention/ responsibility
Uncontested Assumptions	Circumstances taken as given

Interviews

Study Population

The study population includes Indian policy experts, makers, and administrators distributed in networks of overlapping public, private, and hybrid institutions. This includes subjects inferred from archival research, but more importantly the population from which interview subjects were drawn during the fieldwork. Specifically in reference to interview subjects: all were adults, most of them were male, all were of relatively elite status, and all were fluent in English (the lingua franca in which most government business and higher education is conducted)[6]. Although subjects were divided for methodological purposes into two sets, officials and experts, in practice the distinction between them was often blurred.

Rationale for Using Interviews with this Population

Policy formation in Indian agricultural trade could have been approached from any number of angles, with different methods or subject populations than those ultimately chosen here. Much could be learned by studying farmers themselves, their political leaders and lobbyists, state-level administrators, or members of Indian WTO delegations themselves. It could be legitimately asked how this study can say anything meaningful about hegemonic processes in Indian agriculture without speaking to a single farmer. Methodologically, it might also be pointed out that the community I did choose to study is one that produces a great deal of publically-available written text. Why interview a policy expert when I could have read their publications?

In regard to the population chosen, I was less interested in the farmers themselves and in top political decision-makers than I was in the networks which connected them. Choosing to look at the hegemonic process from the 'middle' has some disadvantages. For instance, without understanding the labor processes, direct power relationships, and subject positions of the material producers of agro-commodities, this study cannot claim any direct knowledge of their class interests. What we have instead is only knowledge of the interests attributed to them by experts and officials several steps removed from them in policy formation networks. Rather than seeing this distance as a weakness of the research, however, I see it as an object of analysis in itself. Similarly, the distance between the people I spoke to and top-level negotiators and

[6] It should be noted that the Indian dialect of English differed to some extent from the American dialect the researcher was accustomed to and this presented some difficulties at first.

decision-makers is also an object of analysis. The population I spoke to held intermediate positions as relays between agricultural producers and key government decision makers. As such they acted as interpreters, aggregators, and gatekeepers of policy discourse (of course, the policy expert community is not the only 'channel' of communication between farmers and the government, but it is a very important one).

Returning to the methodological question above, most of the people I interviewed belonged to institutions (both governmental departments and think tanks) which produced large amounts of archival material reflecting the subject I was studying (some of it written by the very people being interviewed). As such, I could have analyzed a selection of these archival documents in the manner of the TPR documents examined in chapters 5- 7. I could have done this without even leaving the United States, given the amount of such archival material available online. The interview method, however, provided insights into aspects of the production of ideas that may have been obscured by the formal rules and conventions in the creation of archival records. Through speaking directly to the interview subjects I gained insight into how the informants saw themselves and their institution in the larger context of policy formation. The anonymity of the interviews allowed for frank opinions of the strengths and weaknesses of the processes and institutions involved. The interactive and dynamic nature of this method provided for an 'up-close' view of idea production. Having to frame their ideas in terms of my questions may have, in some instances, caused the informants to think of them in new ways. Unlike working with a document, I could ask for immediate clarification for a concept I did not understand and for further explanation of the assumptions underlying a position.

Interview Questions and Analysis

The content of the interviews can be roughly divided into three categories. First, I asked questions to contextualize the informants themselves within the discursive networks of interest to the project. This information concerned the informants' background, job responsibilities, areas of expertise, and schools of thought, and their day-to-day processes of gathering and interpreting information. A second group of questions related to the organization they each represented. I asked them about the organization's activities; its personnel; its relation to other similar groups, as well as relationships with government, business, and civil society; and its research. A third group of questions concerned how they looked agricultural trade policy and the WTO. Here, I was interested in how they constructed actors such as the WTO, the Indian government, and various interest groups in India.

Although not all of the questions were the same for every interviewee, they were similar (see Appendix for a sample list of interview questions). They evolved as I gained experience with the subject community and they were often altered to fit the specific circumstances of the informant; for example, I did not ask the government officials a lot of questions about think tanks (although I did ask them about what they considered reliable sources of information). Given the limited time of the interviews and the difficulty of gaining access to elites, I sometimes had to economize my question set to delve more specifically into the informant's particular and valuable set of experiences and knowledge.

The approach to discourse analysis here is somewhat different than in the TPR chapters. I pay less attention to key terms, since the use of such terms was no doubt influenced by how I phrased a question. Most of the interviews were not audio-recorded, and the analysis had to rely on notes. This makes for more use of paraphrasing than direct quotes. Keeping track of exact wording would have slowed interviews down unacceptably, so where direct quotes are used they are by necessity short.

Relational Biography

Delazay and Garth (2002) propose a method they call Relational Biography to explore political-intellectual networks. This involves lengthy in depth interviews with individuals occupying key positions in hypothesized networks, inquiring about such things as educational backgrounds, career paths, and familial/ social milieu. These ideas were used in both the document analysis and interview design. They informed the research by pointing out lines of force and influence that might otherwise be overlooked, like educational background, career trajectories, or connections to international organizations. Some of these dimensions are listed in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Subject dimensions

Subject dimensions
Career History
Family Background
Sources of new and information
Metrics considered reliable
Political affiliations, allegiances
Areas of perceived responsibility/ expertise

Institutional Context of Research Subjects and Statements

Three overlapping discursive arenas or ‘spaces’ were proposed as organizing the research: the WTO, the Indian state, and the Indian policy-expert community. Each of these spaces includes people, archives, institutional relationships, and technological infrastructure. Less tangibly, they also include fields of discourse, habit, and power that influence and constrain them. One of the goals of the analysis was to map these spaces topologically as a way to specify one of the dimensions from which the discourse emerges.

In the case of the WTO and the Indian government, mapping formal institutional structures was comparatively straightforward. Most of the bodies involved fitted neatly into well-defined schematics based on divisions of labor and/ or nested hierarchies. Paths of informal influence are, of course, far more difficult to ascertain, and consequently less certain and more hypothetical, and are discussed elsewhere. The formal structure of research institutions and think tanks was less straightforward but usually more or less coherent and visible.

The institutional structure of the WTO is described in chapter 2. Within the Indian government, two ministries in particular share the main responsibility agro-trade and WTO policy: the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (especially the Department of Commerce, under this ministry) and the Ministry of Agriculture. Authority is further complicated by the federal structure of the Indian state, where that agricultural policy is technically constitutionally reserved for state-level governments (although this has often not true in practice, especially insofar as the WTO is concerned).

Policy formation, of course, does not take place exclusively within insular government bodies. Universities, research institutes, and think tanks with varying degrees of official status form an overall discursive environment in which agro-trade policy is discussed, critiqued, and developed. I have described this as the third discursive arena, but this is a somewhat artificial division and there is a great deal of overlap or hybridity between the government and non-government in the space of policy generation. A number of the research institutes considered in the following chapters are publicly funded and have official responsibilities. The Institute for Agricultural Research at Delhi University, for instance, is used by the government to compile agricultural statistics. In addition, the government sometimes contracts private institutes to collect statistics or undertake studies. Other policy research organizations are funded by philanthropic trusts, chambers of commerce, private firms, and international organizations.

Fieldwork

While most of the archival portion of the research could have been conducted from anywhere with an internet connection, the interview component called for overseas fieldwork. As noted above, this took the form of two separate research trips to India. On my first trip, I spent 2 1/3 months in India and conducted 13 interviews. The second period of fieldwork lasted approximately 3 months and also produced 13 interviews. Both trips were funded by a National Science Foundation grant. During my fieldwork and as a prerequisite for obtaining a research visa, I was granted an affiliation with Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi as a foreign scholar. I also benefitted tremendously from a prior network of friends and professional contacts in India, and especially in Delhi. Delhi University granted me special permission to stay in one of their student hostels.

Subject Recruitment Methods

I employed a number of strategies to recruit interview candidates. I had a surprising number of successes with 'cold' contacts, where I simply emailed suitable candidates identified through previous archival research. A benefit of studying elites is that most of them have enough of a web presence to track down contact information without much difficulty; this is especially true of policy experts with university posts or think tank connections. I was also able to contact a number of informants through intermediaries via a pre-existing network of friends and colleagues in Delhi, especially in academia. This often took several links in a chain of contacts to arrive at a suitable and willing interview subject. This Delhi social network also proved invaluable in providing advice for getting along in Indian bureaucratic culture. Interview subjects themselves were in some cases willing to act as intermediaries to recruit more subjects, or at least recommend other potential research subjects for me to approach. Although contacting interview subjects was a slow and complicated process, once I had established a small number of intermediate contacts, the rate of interviews picked up.

In recruiting officials for interviews, my first choice was those government officials (or former officials) who have worked directly on WTO-agricultural issues, especially those who have served on delegations to Geneva, to any of the various WTO Summits or informal green room meetings, or to any of the G20 meetings. Such officials are rare and difficult to access. During the course of the project I only succeeded in getting an interview with two such people. Other officials were sought who work in areas affected by WTO policy, especially in the Department of Commerce or the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation. Additionally, some officials from state and local governments were interviewed.

In recruiting non-official policy experts, I first selected prominent scholars active in the archives that I had studied. I at first prioritized trying to interview members of the two primary think tanks I chose to focus on: Economic Research Foundation (ERF) and Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER). This group turned out to be unresponsive to my overtures in most cases, but I was able to interview 1-2 subjects from each. Members of publicly-funded research institutes were far more willing to be interviewed. Most of the experts interviewed were economists dealing with trade and/ or agricultural issues. In addition to members of think tanks and public research institutes, I also conducted interviews with prominent activists working in the agro-trade area and university professors identified by other informants as key experts.

Interview Procedures

As a setting for the interview, the subject's office was preferred, but other settings (such as the subject's home or public place such as a café) were accommodated. Interviews were conducted verbally and recorded in written notes. Each interview was about 60- 90 minutes, though they were shorter or longer depending on the interviewee's schedule. Occasionally, additional material and clarifications were added via follow up communications.

All interviews were conducted under conditions of anonymity. No names are given and specific information about informants' job titles and institutional affiliation is avoided where possible. Preserving the anonymity of my subjects is important because many of them work in government and other hierarchical institutions where frank expression of opinion may damage job prospects and reputation. Some of my subjects appreciated this anonymity; others were indifferent. More than one indicated that that they did not state anything in the interview that they would not state publicly. Nonetheless, anonymity is preserved in all cases, whether desired or not. I have not made use of fake names or any other specific informant designation system. It is therefore possible that two pieces of information from the same informant may not be identifiable as such if mentioned in different contexts.

A consent form approved by the University of Kentucky Institutional Review Board (IRB) was delivered to the subjects prior to, or at the beginning of, the interview. These forms contained a brief explanation of the project, assurances of confidentiality and other research subject rights, and contact information, in the event of inquiries or complaints, for the researcher and for the Office of Research Integrity at the University of Kentucky. The content of the form was also explained verbally at the start of the interview, including the provision that the subject can stop the interview at any time and/ or withdraw their consent to use the information disclosed during the interview even after the interview has been completed. This information was reiterated at the conclusion of the interview as well. It was impractical to offer a translation of the consent form in the speaker's first language. Scholars and officials in Delhi come from all over India and there is no way of determining in advance what their native language is and the provision of consent form translations in all of the major languages of India (there are well over a dozen major languages and even more minor ones) would be prohibitively complicated and expensive. Further, it was assumed that if the subject is fluent enough in English to participate in government business and academic life, then they were able to comprehend a document written in English.

Approaching Semi-Structured Interviews with Elites as a Foreigner

The interviews were semi-structured, conversational rather than 'questionnaire-style.' Interview questions were tailored to the subject, differing to some extent between officials and experts. Although a prepared set of questions was developed (see appendix), the answers were for the most part open-ended and new questions were sometimes developed on the spot to ask for clarification on answers or further probe promising themes that emerged from initial answers. Furthermore, experience in one interview often led to alterations to the next. The data derived from the interviews provided further expert discourse for analysis and also helped to map out the networks through which this discourse was produced by establishing something about the backgrounds and network positions of the actors involved.

Interviews are localized and directed productions of discourse (Rose 1997). However, the outcome of the interview is a special sort of discourse in that the researcher collaborates in its production. This project takes the perspective that the interview produces new knowledge, rather than simply uncovering pre-existing facts. I mean 'new knowledge' not in the sense that it was plucked out of thin air or 'made-up' on the spot, but in the sense that the material is being reshaped by the researcher's frame of interpretation and also by the creativity of the respondent in recombining and articulating their knowledge (for instance, the way a question is worded may prompt the respondent to think about something in a new way or make a connection they had not thought of before).

There are two specific sets of problems that were likely to arise in the context of the interviews in this project: those arising from interviewing in a cross-cultural context and those arising from interviewing elites. Insofar as policy experts, who were mostly economists, were the subject of my interviews, I was a 'foreigner' in more than one sense, not only from another country but from another discipline. Skelton (2001) suggests that in preparing for cross-cultural research, it is important to read as much as possible about the community being researched written by members of that community. This was not difficult in the case of this project, given the archival portion of the research that preceded the interviews themselves. In some cases, the interview subjects were the primary authors of some of the documents I had reviewed.

Misunderstandings may occur during interviews due to inconsistencies between the frames of references between the researcher and the respondent. The principle of reflexivity requires that we examine our own frames of reference (our positionality) to minimize such misunderstandings. Rose (1997) notes, however, that perfect self-knowledge is impossible and this puts limits on the usefulness of reflexivity. Many feminist researchers (Skelton 2001; Mohammad 2001; McKay 2002; Rose 1997) have suggested that paying attention to how the respondents construct the researcher is an important tool of reflexivity. It is often useful to actively negotiate this construction to establish trust and rapport with the respondent.

Interviewing elites (scholars and officials in this case) often involves difficulties in gaining access. Elites tend to have layers of gatekeepers controlling access to them and they tend to consider their time very valuable. England (2002) recommends that one must be "shamelessly opportunistic" when approaching elites, exploiting contacts and intermediaries to the fullest. In my own fieldwork, I was helped tremendously to gain access to elites by a small number of reliable intermediaries.

Chapter 5: Trade Policy Reviews (1998- 2007)

The characteristic form of agricultural exceptionalism that made the G20 (see chapter 2 for an explanation of the G20) work – opposition to direct producer subsidies coupled with tolerance of tariffs, administered prices, and other 'poor' country policy instruments – did not emerge out of a vacuum. Since the early years of the WTO's operation, Indian governments have defended protectionist practices toward their own agricultural population, while attacking agricultural trade barriers in developed countries. The improving bargaining position of India and other big developing countries, along with their ability to put aside their differences in other areas put this brand of agro-exceptionalism at the center of the 'rebellion' at Cancun and most WTO negotiations since.

In this and the following two chapters, I will examine the evolution of India-WTO trade discourse, with a focus on the exceptional position of agriculture, via an analysis of documents produced through the Trade Policy Review Mechanism. Trade Policy Reviews or TPRs are periodic meetings of WTO representatives at Geneva, set aside to examine and evaluate the economic policies of one member. Each member is obligated under WTO rules to periodically submit to a TPR, the frequency of which depends on factors including the size of its economy. The WTO website itself provides the following rationale:

> Surveillance of national trade policies is a fundamentally important activity running throughout the work of the WTO. At the centre of this work is the Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM). All WTO members are reviewed, the frequency of each country's review varying according to its share of world trade (WTO 2007).

India is subject to TPRs about every 4- 5 years and has undergone reviews in 1998, 2002, and 2007. It also underwent a similar review in 1993 under GATT, shortly before that agreement was superseded and absorbed by the WTO. For this reason the '98, '02, and '07 reviews are often numbered as India's 2nd, 3rd, and 4th reviews. This chapter will examine the first three reviews that took place after the creation of the WTO. A fourth review conducted in 2011 is not considered here.

These meetings are in most ways less dramatic than the major WTO Ministerial Meetings or Dispute Settlement Cases. They lead to no binding decisions and are not negotiations in the formal sense. They could easily be dismissed as a sideshow that contributes little to the real work of the WTO, but to do so would overlook an important resource pertaining to the political-discursive environment of the WTO. Here are a number of reasons to study the TPR. First, the low-stakes nature of these meetings allows the participants to talk more freely and in more general terms than in forums where specific agreements or binding judgments are being hammered out. Second, since all members are invited to participate, they provide a good survey of the current concerns, preoccupations, and sympathies of various members, especially with respect to the target country. Third, they provide the target country itself with a platform not only to justify its own economic policies, but also to criticize those of its trading partners. Finally, for reasons explained below, they provide a clearer-than-usual view of the normative standards of the WTO in general and of the Secretariat in particular.

One of the most striking aspects of the TPRM is its scope. It does, as might be expected, concern itself with if and how well the member is fulfilling its obligations under the WTO agreements. However, this is not the only or even the primary object of scrutiny. Rather, it includes a broad critique of all aspects of a country's economic policy, regardless of whether that aspect is regulated by the WTO or not. Despite its name, the review does not even limit itself to trade policy, but takes on any aspect of economic policy that might influence trade (which is almost anything). During the course of the review, matters such as tax policy, banking regulation, government budgets, and social policies such as food distribution are subject to evaluation and critique. As a fundamentally evaluative exercise, the TPRs are concerned with examination and judgment. This leads us to the following question. What normative standards do the participants use to judge policies where no formal WTO rules apply?

Each review involves a number of stages. First, the Secretariat - the permanent bureaucratic staff of the WTO headquartered in Geneva (see chapter 2 for a more detailed description) - produces a report critiquing the target country's economic policies. The target country then produces its own report (called the Government Report) explaining, and if necessary defending its policies (it can also be used to air some of its own grievances on trade issues). The next stage involves the meeting of the Trade Policy Review Body (TPRB), which consists of representatives of each member entity (see chapter 2 for an explanation of the distinction between 'member entity' and 'country'). During the course of the meeting, various member countries take the floor and provide their own assessments of the target country's economic policy. The Secretariat Report and the Government Report serve as a starting point for discussion in the meeting and are often referred to by speakers there.

Key Documents of the TPR

Each of these three stages corresponds to a key document produced during the course of each TPR. These are available for download on the WTO website (the Secretariat Report is split into multiple documents), along with associated documents containing addendums and press releases. These documents contain no specific attributions of authorship, although several of the key participants in the meeting are named – including the chairperson, the discussant, and the leader or leaders of the Indian delegation. The other speakers in the meeting minutes are simply identified as the representative of the member state they are speaking for. The TPR meetings, like most WTO business aside from Ministerial Summits, take place in Geneva.

The Secretariat Reports

The Secretariat plays a key role in the TPRM, not only as an organizer and facilitator, but as an active participant. Prior to the meeting, the Secretariat undertakes a study of the target member's economy and its economic policies and releases a comprehensive critique called the Secretariat Report, the contents of which inform all subsequent stages of the TPR. In these reports, we have perhaps the most thorough and detailed expression of the normative orientation of Secretariat available (a notion which is reinforced by the non-specification of authors other than the 'WTO Secretariat' in the actual documents).

As noted above, compliance with WTO agreements is only a small part of what is discussed in TPRs. The Secretariat Reports "cover the development of all aspects of India's trade policies, including domestic laws and regulations, the institutional framework, trade policies by measure and by sector" (WTO 2002a). Since virtually any aspect of economic policy can be argued to influence trade, there is little outside of the scope of the critique. Everything from labor laws to the judiciary are examined and evaluated. Where there are no specific WTO rules applying to the policy under review, the critique reveals the normative criteria that the Secretariat applies in the absence of official rules. The Secretariat is ideologically neutral in theory; but in the case of TPRs it advocated often very specific policy reforms that are not covered in any WTO agreement. The basic theme of all three Secretariat Reports is a combination of praise for India's liberal reform program and criticism that it has not gone far enough, fast enough.

The Government Reports

The Government Report, written by representatives of the member's government, follows and is informed by the Secretariat Report. It provides the target member with an opportunity to explain and if necessary to justify its economic policies. As it is a response to the Secretariat Report, it is constrained to some extent to defend itself within a normative framework already established in the Secretariat Report. In explaining its own economic policies, the target country also has a platform to criticize the policies of its trading partners. Protectionist measures in particular can be explained as a justified reaction to the defensive or aggressive trade practices of other members. In each of the three TPRs, the Indian government never failed to use this platform to turn the critique against its trading partners, particularly its developed trading partners. Although the three TPRs took place under different Indian administrations, the Government Reports have consistently been a mix of economic triumphalism regarding India's reform programs; defensive assertions about the pace and scope of liberalization; and critiques of the policies of India's developed trading partners.

The Meeting Report

All WTO members are invited to participate in the TPR as part of the Trade Policy Review Body (TPRB). The minutes of the meeting record the comments of each speaker, but in paraphrasing rather than direct quotes. Only the chairpersons, the discussants, and the heads of the Indian delegation are identified by name. And they are usually referred to by their titles after the introduction. The other TPRB members are only referred to as the representative of their respective countries. Often (especially in the 2002 meeting minutes) they are referred to with only their country's name after their initial introduction. Thus the representative of Japan is introduced initially: "The representative of Japan invited India to explain..." but, two paragraphs later, the statement takes the form of “Japan noted that the number of AD [anti-dumping] measures taken by India had risen steadily,...” (WTO 2002c, para. 52, 54). The WTO Secretariat is not represented as a speaker in the meeting, but the initial Secretariat Report is frequently referred to as an authoritative text (often quoted word-for-word by meeting participants), and used to support various statements.

While India as the target country is always represented by high-ranking delegates from the Indian government, usually the Secretary of Commerce, the other members are represented by their permanent missions to the WTO in Geneva. These usually hold the rank of ambassador and they meet under different functional directives as the General Council of the WTO and the Dispute Settlement Body (WTO 2007b). Not all (or even most) members are recorded as speaking during the course of the meeting. This could indicate that they were absent, that they were present but silent, or that their comments were not deemed important enough to include in the minutes.

The comments of the speaking representatives are often repetitive of one another and of the Secretariat report. However, there is enough difference in tone and emphases among them to detect specific themes of support or opposition to India’s policies and positions. For example, I argue that the 2002 meeting minutes can be read as a prelude to the developing members’ revolt at Cancun, demonstrating a pattern of mutual support among future members of the G20 and their desire for agricultural subsidy reform.

All three of the meetings followed a standard format. First the chairperson made a brief introduction. This was followed by a statement by the Indian delegation, explaining its government’s point-of-view on its own policies and economic strategies. The discussant or discussants went next, reiterating and expanding on themes brought up in the Secretariat Report. The 1998 meeting had two discussants, so there were four altogether. They were identified by their membership entity – Singapore, Australia, Ireland, and the EU – but it was stressed that they spoke only in their personal capacities, not as representatives of their governments. The longest parts of each meeting were the comments (of varying lengths) by the member representatives. Then the Indian delegation spoke again in response, followed by brief discussant statements, followed by additional comments by a few of the member representatives. The chairperson then ended the meeting with a set of concluding remarks. Each of the meetings was split up over two days, although the documents made no mention of when the day split occurs. It is implied, but not definitively asserted, that the recorded comments followed the same chronology as the actual meeting.

Historical Contexts

Each of the three TPRs took place under different coalition governments in India. The 1998 TPR took place during a period of many short-lived transitional coalitions, while in 2002 the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party or "India People's Party") led a right-wing coalition. By 2007, the more centrist Congress Party was back in power. The Congress' electoral victory in 2004 is sometimes attributed to a rural constituency dissatisfied with the BJP's neglect of agriculture, which may be why agriculture features more prominently in the 2007 Government Report than the others.

The first trade review took place in 1998 only three years after the WTO had officially gone into operation. Expectations for the future of the institution more optimistic at this time than they would later become, and such time-lapse provisions such as the Peace Clause in the Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture, the step-by-step dismantling of the Multi-Fibre Agreement, and various implementation periods for tariff reductions and other reforms were still in progress. This was also prior to the first major impasse in Seattle in 1999, when intense negative public sentiment towards the WTO became ubiquitous. Outside of the WTO itself, the TPR was also coincident with the East Asian Economic crisis, which had begun the year before. The crisis not only affected the Indian and global economy directly, but also resulted in a substantial ideological challenge to the Washington Consensus (at the height of which the WTO had been designed – see chapter 2).

India itself was seven years into its liberalization program by this time and the early economic indications were relatively optimistic (omitting a contemporary slowdown in growth that could be attributed to the East Asia crisis). Not long before, in 1996, a government dominated by the Congress Party had given way to a series of unstable coalition governments dominated by the BJP and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. It is also worth noting that the 1998 TPR took place just a few months prior to a nuclear weapons test that led to a diplomatic crisis and cooling of foreign relations with a number of trading partners, especially the United States.

The 2002 TPR took place between the ministerials at Doha (2001) and Cancun (2003). Confidence in the WTO had been shaken by the 1999 collapse at Seattle. However, the Doha meeting had started a new round of negotiations, and there was still widespread hope that the Doha 'Development' Round would lead to a better deal for developing country members of the WTO. Another major development was that China had joined the WTO in 2001. The G20 had not yet been formed, but would be shortly before Cancun the following year.

India in 2002 was under a more stable BJP-led coalition (popular especially due to its perceived success in the brief 1999 Kargil War with Pakistan). However, it was also experiencing a severe agricultural recession, accompanied by a growing number of farmer suicides and negative publicity from the 'rotting rice store' story (see chapter 7). Further, India had recently met with a defeat within the dispute settlement mechanism of the WTO, forcing it to dismantle its regime of quantitative restrictions of imports ahead of schedule.

By 2007, it was clear that the Doha 'Development' Round was deadlocked and expectations had been lowered on the possibility of a substantial breakthrough. The Cancun revolt had led to a realignment of power in the WTO, with the profile of India, Brazil, and China being substantially raised by the success of the G20. Brazil had also spearheaded two substantial complaints against agricultural subsidies in the United States and the EU though the Dispute Settlement Mechanism, which resulted in a stricter interpretation of WTO rules on agricultural subsidies.

In India, the Congress Party had retaken power in 2004 under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, a former finance minister who was closely associated with the initial liberalization program in the 1990s. This election had also raised the profile of farmers, since the defeat of the BJP was attributed at least in part to a rural constituency dissatisfied with the government's lack of attention to agriculture. The new Congress government quickly made a show of its concern for farmers, holding a national summit on agriculture in 2005, among other things.

Members' Positions and Patterns

The Secretariat Report and the Government Report are the starting point for the Trade Policy Review, and set the agenda for the subsequent meeting. The meeting itself is, however, is in many ways the most interesting and revealing part of the TPR. As a forum in which all members are invited to participate, it is in theory a survey of the current concerns, preoccupations, and sympathies of the participating governments at the time of the meeting, especially with (but not necessarily limited to) the target country. To this we must add the qualification that we cannot reduce the comments of representatives to the literal expressions of the will and sentiment of monolithic states or entities.

The meetings are structured as follows. The chairperson speaks first, followed by the Indian delegation, and then the discussant or discussants. This is followed by the highlight of the meetings – the comments of the members' representatives. The chair, Indian representatives, discussants, and often some members speak in the last section as well. The chairs' comments here are often illuminating for their summary quality, often taking the form of "many members commented upon X." It may be worth noting that all four discussants in the three TPRs were from developed economies. Part III will focus mainly on the member comments, though some reference to the other speakers is merited.

Table 5.1: Speaker Wordcounts in TPR Meetings 1998, 2002, & 2007

	1998	2002	2007	Total, all 3 years	Percent 1998	Percent 2002	Percent 2007	Percent Totals
India	3448	7063	6287	16798	21.1%	35.3%	37.4%	31.6%
Discussants	2095	1830	1880	5805	12.8%	9.1%	11.2%	10.9%
Chair	2646	1354	1519	5519	16.2%	6.8%	9.0%	10.4%
European Union	1165	806	1174	3145	7.1%	4.0%	7.0%	5.9%
United States	1040	695	1405	3140	6.4%	3.5%	8.4%	5.9%
Canada	1082	582	303	1967	6.6%	2.9%	1.8%	3.7%
Japan	546	475	283	1304	3.3%	2.4%	1.7%	2.5%
Norway	630	448	115	1193	3.9%	2.2%	0.7%	2.2%
New Zealand	433	451	239	1123	2.7%	2.3%	1.4%	2.1%
Hong Kong	239	541	220	1000	1.5%	2.7%	1.3%	1.9%
ASEAN	481	0	440	921	3.0%	0.0%	2.6%	1.7%
Korea, S	256	405	218	879	1.6%	2.0%	1.3%	1.7%
Switzerland	218	365	270	853	1.3%	1.8%	1.6%	1.6%
Australia	659	0	128	787	4.0%	0.0%	0.8%	1.5%
Sri Lanka	76	432	213	721	0.5%	2.2%	1.3%	1.4%
Brazil	92	120	349	561	0.6%	0.6%	2.1%	1.1%
Mauritius	22	527	0	549	0.1%	2.6%	0.0%	1.0%
Jamaica	0	482	0	482	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	0.9%
Colombia	146	168	149	463	0.9%	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%
Singapore	0	340	81	421	0.0%	1.7%	0.5%	0.8%

Speaking Quantity compared to Volume of Trade

One way to analyze the text of the Meeting Minutes is to quantify the role of each speaker by the number of words attributed to them. This provides a rough proxy measure for gauging the interest and concern with India's role in the WTO among the parties represented. Some qualifications must be added to the utility of this metric. First, the length of a comment does not necessarily reflect its importance. Second, the form of the recording – through paraphrasing rather than direct quotes – may introduce additional distortions and omissions.

There is no way of telling whether or not the transcription process lengthened or shortened what the speaker actually said.

Table 5.1 lists the contribution of the most vocal speakers according to wordcount (as derived via Microsoft Word 2010). The first three columns display the number of words recorded for each speaker in each of the three TPRs, while the fourth shows the total wordcount for the speaker in all three TPRs (the 'speaker' here refers to the role, not the individual, i.e. the chairperson in each TPR is a different person). The last four columns repeat these quantities as a percentage of the total words in each document. Not all of the speakers are listed. The top 20 were selected based on the total wordcount in all three TPRs (column four).

Not surprisingly, the Indian delegation itself did the most talking in each of the three TPRs. We can also note that the discussants and the chairs spoke more in each case than any single member delegate except for India (the discussants spoke longer than the chairs in all but 1998). The most striking thing about the next several speakers on the list is that they are mostly developed economies (especially if Hong Kong and South Korea are considered developed). It is notable that the top four speakers constitute the members of the informal 'Quad' grouping (see chapter 2) – The European Union, the United States, Canada, and Japan. The Cairns Group is also well represented (by Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, and Colombia). This imbalance among developed and developing economies appears most pronounced in the 1998 Meeting and least pronounced in 2002. Among developing country members, ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) ranks the highest. It should be noted that although in two of the meetings, ASEAN was represented by a delegate speaking on their behalf, each member of ASEAN is an individual member of the WTO; it is not counted as single entity in the manner of the EU.

Tables 5.2- 5.5 juxtapose the wordcounts of speakers from the 2002 and 2007 TPR Meetings with the trade volumes of the represented entities with India for those two years. The first two tables (5.2 and 5.3) rank the entities by wordcount, excluding India and non-member speakers from the list. The second two (5.4 and 5.5) rank the same entities by trade volume with India. Trade volume here is sum of all imports and exports between the listed entity and India for that year, in US Dollars (International Trade Center 2013).

Table 5.2: Top 20 Speakers in 2002 Meeting, compared to Trade Volume, 2002

	Trade Partner	Trade Volume 2002	Wordcount
1	European Union	23,057,414	806
2	United States	14,215,132	695
3	Canada	1,254,787	582
4	Hong Kong	3,261,282	541
5	Mauritius	170,773	527
6	Jamaica	10,814	482
7	Japan	3,926,640	475
8	New Zealand	143,268	451
9	Norway	118,910	448
10	Sri Lanka	924,178	432
11	South Korea	1,879,534	405
12	Switzerland	2,595,369	365
13	Singapore	2,714,085	340
14	Czech Republic	125,613	278
15	Hungary	77,336	277
16	China	4,151,453	276
17	Philippines	600,077	245
18	Chile	204,531	229
19	Colombia	69,013	168
20	Cuba	8,995	166

Table 5.3: Top 20 Speakers in 2007 Meeting, compared to Trade Volume, 2007

	Trade Partner	Trade Volume 2007	Wordcount
1	United States	34,339,700	1405
2	European Union	64,017,300	1174
3	ASEAN	34,855,116	440
4	Brazil	2,777,501	349
5	Canada	3,189,050	303
6	Japan	9,096,215	283
7	Switzerland	11,209,037	270
8	New Zealand	441,843	239
9	Chinese Taipei	3,745,653	224
10	Hong Kong	8,665,768	220
11	South Korea	7,900,243	218
12	Sri Lanka	3,035,557	213
13	Nigeria	8,010,209	164
14	Colombia	657,649	149
15	Uruguay	60,909	130
16	Australia	8,763,978	128
17	Mexico	1,632,144	123
18	Norway	1,285,859	115
19	Chile	2,114,031	110
20	China	34,067,750	109

Table 5.4: Top 20 Trade Partners 2002, compared to 2002 Meeting Wordcounts

	Trade Partner	Trade Volume 2002	Wordcount
1	European Union	23,057,414	806
2	United States	14,215,132	695
3	China	4,151,453	276
4	United Arab Emirates	3,977,441	0
5	Japan	3,926,640	475
6	Hong Kong	3,261,282	541
7	Singapore	2,714,085	340
8	Switzerland	2,595,369	365
9	South Africa	2,422,810	0
10	Malaysia	2,073,291	150
11	Indonesia	2,032,862	0
12	South Korea	1,879,534	405
13	Australia	1,833,091	0
14	Saudi Arabia	1,377,979	0
16	Russia	1,316,854	0
17	Canada	1,254,787	582
18	Israel	1,174,160	0
19	Thailand	1,106,270	100
20	Bangladesh	1,081,931	146

Table 5.5: Top 20 Trade Partners 2007, compared to 2007 Meeting Wordcounts

	Trade Partner	Trade Volume 2007	Wordcount
1	European Union	64,017,300	1174
2	ASEAN	34,855,116	440
3	United States	34,339,700	1405
4	China	34,067,750	109
5	United Arab Emirates	26,149,847	0
6	Saudi Arabia	19,791,562	0
7	Singapore	13,291,675	81
8	Switzerland	11,209,037	270
9	Iran	11,010,837	0
10	Japan	9,096,215	283
11	Australia	8,763,978	128
12	Hong Kong	8,665,768	220
13	Nigeria	8,010,209	164
14	South Korea	7,900,243	218
15	Malaysia	7,575,812	0
16	Kuwait	7,106,703	0
17	Indonesia	6,718,542	0
18	Iraq	5,640,657	0
19	South Africa	5,311,296	0
20	Thailand	3,865,705	0

One might expect that the greater the volume of trade a country/ entity had with India, the more commentary their delegation would offer at the TPR meetings. In fact, this is often the case. The European Union is among India's top trading partners and its representatives always rank at or near the top in terms of wordcount at the meetings (first in 1998 and 2002, second to the United States in 2007). This is also true for the United States, and to a lesser extent, the members of ASEAN.

However, there are notable cases where these ranks do not correspond closely at all. China ranked 4th by trading volume with India in both 2002 and 2004, but had comparatively little to say at the meetings (China joined the WTO in 2001). The United Arab Emirates ranked 5th in both, but its delegation is never recorded as speaking during the meetings. Saudi Arabia joined the WTO in 2005 and was India's 6th largest trading partner in 2007, but was silent at the 2007 meeting.

Likewise, there were member delegations that spoke at much greater length than their importance as trading partners would suggest. Both New Zealand and Norway spoke in all three meetings, and often at considerable length, yet neither ranked particularly high in the values of their trade with India. Mauritius and Sri Lanka also spoke at greater length than their trade volume would suggest, but their greater interest could be attributed to their status as neighbors of, and members of regional trade agreements with, India. Also, given the small size of Mauritius' economy, what would qualify as only a fraction of a percent of India's trade would compose proportionally a much larger share of Mauritius' trade.

Speaking Quantities by Economic Development Category

Another way to analyze the speaker wordcounts is to aggregate them by category. Table 5.6 breaks speakers down into three categories. The first includes the Indian delegation and non-member speakers (the chairs and discussants). The rest of the speakers are divided according whether they are considered advanced or developing economies, using the classification system of the International Monetary Fund (IMF 1998, 2002, 2007)[7]. The percentages given represent each group's percentage of total wordcount for each TPR and for all three TPRs. Each of the four columns is then represented as a pie chart (Figure 5.1). In each review, Indian representatives and non-member speakers filled a little more than half the wordcount. Advanced economy representatives consistently spoke at greater length than

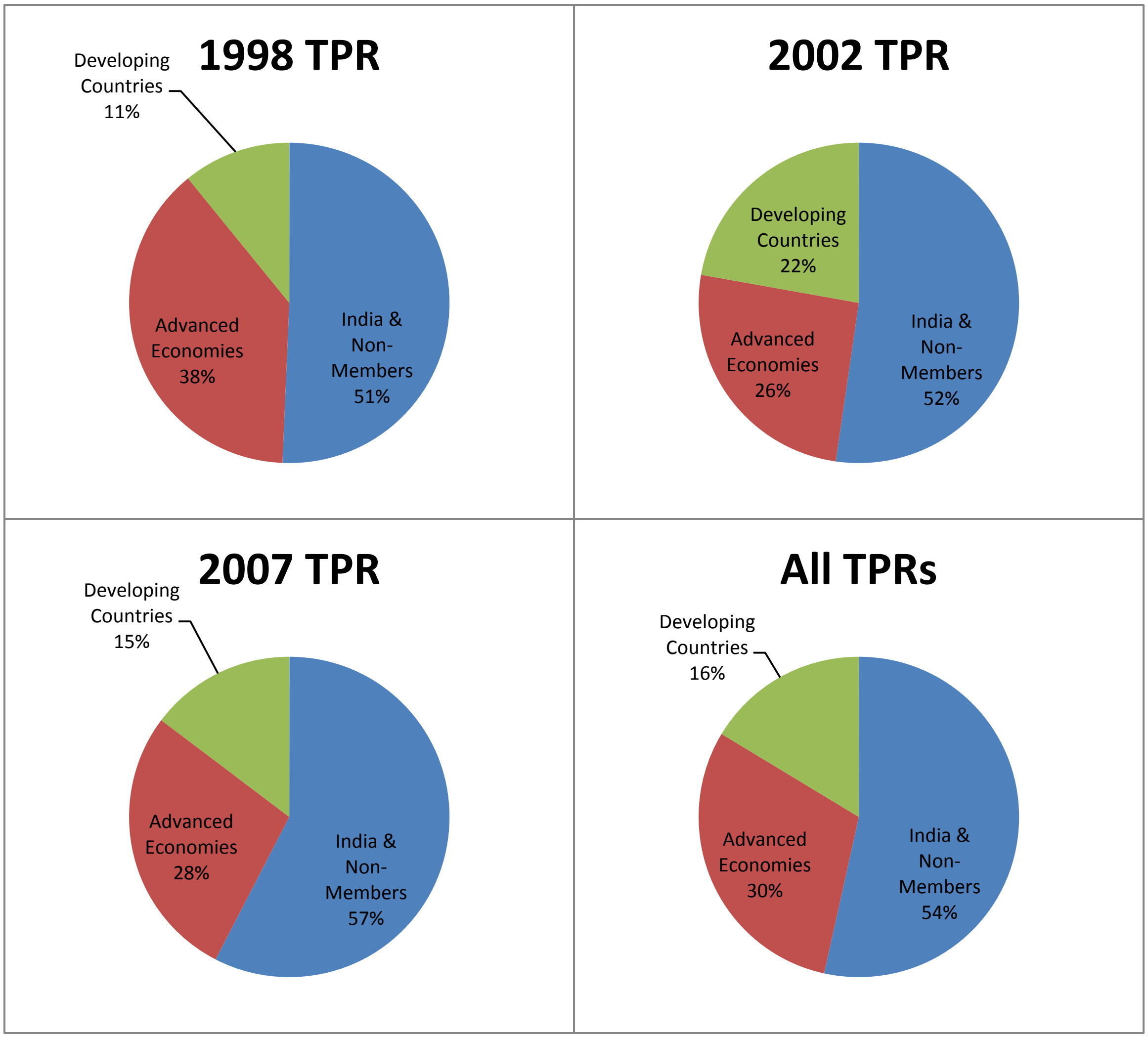
[7] By 2007, the European Union included some countries considered developing by the IMF classification scheme (at that time), mainly in Eastern Europe. This is ignored for the purposes of Table 5.6 and the wordcount of the EU representative is simply included with the advanced economies.

developing country representatives (or at least were recorded as doing so), but the imbalance varied from Review to Review. In 1998, advanced economy representatives spoke well over three times as much as developing representatives, while 2002 saw a closer to even match.

Table 5.6: Wordcount as percentage, by category

	1998 TPR	2002 TPR	2007 TPR	All TPRs
India & Non-Members	50.7%	52.3%	57.6%	53.5%
Advanced Economies	38.4%	25.5%	27.7%	30.2%
Developing Countries	10.9%	22.2%	14.7%	16.4%

Figure 5.1: Wordcount as percentage, by category, as Pie Charts



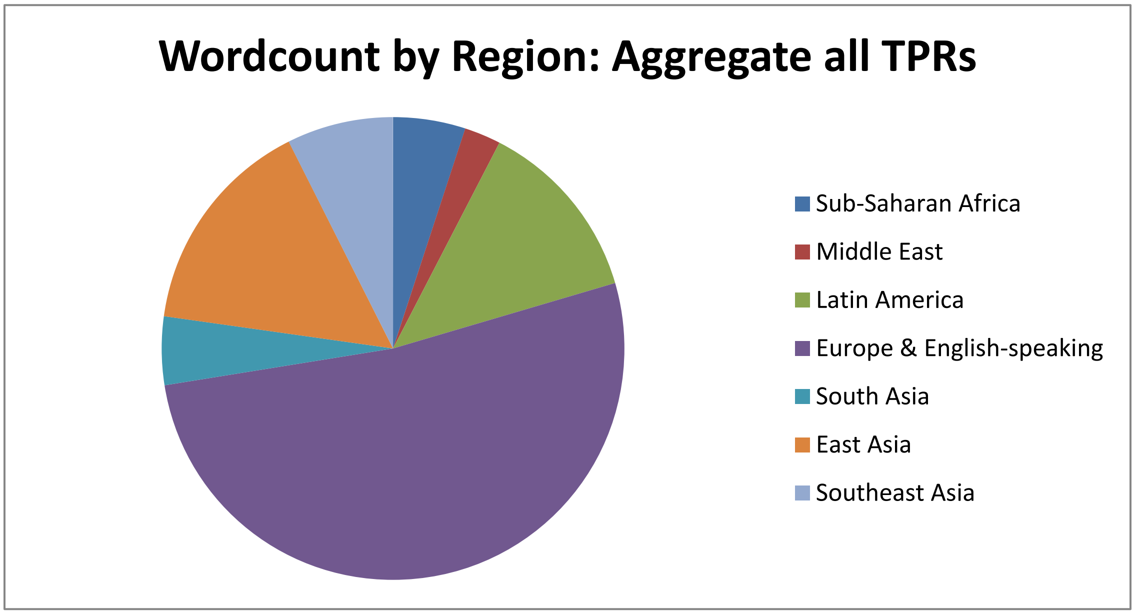
Break Down by Regions

Table 5.7 and the Figure 5.2 break down wordcounts in the TPRs by speakers aggregated by region. "Europe & English-speaking" is a rather awkward category meant to capture the developed economies outside of East Asia. It includes the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand but not smaller developing English-speaking countries in the Caribbean. That it ranks first overwhelmingly (over half of all non-India Member speech in two of the TPRs) reflects what we learned in the last section – that representatives of developed economies were recorded as speaking in more in these TPRs. East Asia, which included most developed economy members not included in the last category, ranks second except in 2007. The other regions, overwhelmingly consisting of developing countries, do contain some interesting results. Latin American and the Caribbean consistently score high. This may be partly an artifact of this region containing so many countries, although Sub-Saharan Africa, which contains even more WTO members, has substantially less wordcount. One surprise is the lack of commentary by Middle Eastern countries, considering the high volume of trade India had with this region.

Table 5.7: Wordcount as percentage by Region (not including Indian Representative and non-member speakers)

Regions	1998 TPR	2002 TPR	2007 TPR	all three
Sub-Saharan Africa	1.53%	8.01%	5.05%	5.05%
Middle East	2.59%	3.29%	1.49%	2.54%
Latin America & the Caribbean	7.44%	15.32%	15.64%	12.85%
Europe & English-speaking	66.25%	40.84%	50.96%	52.02%
South Asia	3.27%	6.05%	4.78%	4.78%
East Asia	12.95%	17.76%	14.78%	15.34%
Southeast Asia	5.98%	8.74%	7.31%	7.43%
Total non-India Member	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Figure 5.2: Wordcount as percentage, by category, as Pie Charts



Factions in the Meetings

Various factional groupings within the WTO have been discussed previously in chapter 2. The most important alliance for India and agricultural trade was of course the G20, although it also belonged to the G33, an older group with a separate agro-related agenda (concerning 'special products'). The Quad and the Cairns group, neither of which counted India as a member, also played extensive roles in the agricultural arguments within the WTO, often adversarial to the Indian government's positions.

Table 5.8 lists once again percentage wordcounts, based on these factional groupings. The G20 did not officially exist in the first two TPRs (although it was formed very soon after the 2002 TPR), but if we assume that this group of countries had similar interests prior to the foundation of the faction, then aggregating them for earlier meetings is still illustrative. The G20 figures include all current and former members, though El Salvador and Egypt had left the group before 2007.

Table 5.8: Wordcount as percentage, by faction

Faction	1998	2002	2007	All three
TOTAL QUAD	23.5%	12.8%	18.8%	18.0%
TOTAL G20	28.0%	41.8%	44.9%	37.6%
G20 minus India	6.8%	6.5%	7.5%	6.0%
TOTAL CAIRNS	18.9%	10.7%	9.5%	11.9%
TOTAL G33	29.4%	50.9%	44.2%	41.3%
G33 minus India	8.3%	15.7%	6.8%	9.7%

As noted above, the representatives of India had the highest wordcount of any speakers in all three TRPs, and thus the figures for the G20 and G33 which include India are correspondingly large. Perhaps a better illustration of the relative voice of each faction (or "proto-faction" where the meeting pre-dates formation) in each meeting is the figure for the wordcount of non-India members only. These are given in Table 5.8 in the shaded rows. With India, the G33 and (proto-) G20 speak the most in each TPR; without India, they speak the least.

The (non-India) breakdown is in part representative of the advanced/ developing economy breakdown in the previous section. The Quad consists entirely of developed economies and its representatives are responsible for 18% of the speech in the three TPRs.[8] The Cairns group is responsible for about 12%. It contains only three developed countries – Canada, New Zealand, and Australia – but these were collectively responsible for more than half of this percentage. The non-India G33 and G20, consisting almost entirely of developing countries (South Korea, a member of the G33, is the only exception) had 9.7% and 6% of the total wordcount, respectively. Observing the figures for the individual TPRs, we notice an interesting inversion in 2002 where the G33's wordcount, even without India, exceeds that of the Quad members.

[8] Once again, IMF-designated 2007 developing country members of the EU are ignored for the purposes of these calculations.

Conclusion

The nine key documents examined here (the Secretariat Reports, Government Reports, and Meeting Reports for three TPRs) cover three out of five of India's Trade Policy Reviews: 1998, 2002, and 2007. The Indian TPRs are in turn a subset of a large collection of TPR documents focused on each member of the WTO. The archive of TPR documents are one set of vast array of documents available for public download from the official WTO site. These particular nine documents were selected for reasons such as their relevance to Indian WTO strategy, their potential to offer a glimpse into the normative standards of the WTO Secretariat, and their inclusion of commentary from a diverse cross-section of members. The documents excluded, such as the 1993 India TPR undertaken under GATT before the formation of the WTO, would doubtlessly have provided valuable additional insights. It would be very interesting in a future study to compare India's TPRs with those of other countries, and to examine the statements made by Indian representatives in other TPR meetings. Finally, other sets of documents in the WTO's internet archive, such policy papers submitted by the Indian government or the records of formal disputes involving India would also shed a great deal of light of the positions and strategies of successive Indian governments in the WTO. When seen in this context, the nine documents analyzed, although they collectively cover hundreds of pages of text, seem a drop in the bucket compared to archives of relevant documents available. Ultimately, the archival portion of this research had to be kept to a manageable level and the method of close and detailed analysis use here lent itself better to a very close reading of a few documents then to a more cursory examination of many. The conclusions drawn in this in the following chapters are limited by this modest selection of material.

The two chapters following this one will analyze in detail the content of the statements composing these documents. In this chapter we merely looked at the context in which these documents were produced, the formal procedures for their creation, the roles of various speakers, and the broad form and distribution of the statements. The distribution of statements is especially important in the Meeting Reports, since statements are attributed to such a large set of individual speakers. The second half of the chapter is dedicated to breaking down whom spoke, when, and how much, as well dividing them into broad groupings, like non-member speakers, representatives of developed or developing countries, members by region, etc. A few general observations can made based on this. In terms of Foucauldian discourse analysis, these observations would fall under the category of 'enunciative modalities' or statement style, that is, what we can discern about the conditions under which statements are produced.

One notable feature about the speakers is the lack of attribution of authorship, or rather the attribution of authorship to large, personified entities rather than named individuals. The Secretariat Report is written by the Secretariat, the Government Report by the government of India. The closest the former comes to identifying a responsible individual is (only in 2002 and 2007 Reports) a brief note at the beginning regarding an individual to contact with any 'technical questions.' The Meeting Reports, in contrast, contain a number of named individuals: the chairpersons, discussants, and the representatives of India are all identified by name and country of origin. The representatives of all other member entities, however, are identified only by the country they represent.

In this mode of speaking, the speaker claims and is understood to speak on behalf of or in place of a larger abstract entity – a country, a group of countries, or an institution (with some exceptions). In some cases when a representative is speaking, the 'representative of' part of their title is dropped and the speaker is referred to as if they are their country. In a sense the country or member entity is understood to be embodied within the room in the person of the representative. The individuality of the representative, as well as the instructions they received and whatever interests and conflicts led to these instructions, are obscured behind this abstraction. For the purposes of the meeting the country is understood as a unified entity with a point of view and a coherent set of interests embodied in the representative empowered to speak for it.

Similarly, the small group of Secretariat personnel who prepared the Secretariat report is depersonalized into an abstraction of the Secretariat itself. As a unified abstraction, the Secretariat is somewhat different from a country. A country can be and often is in this context constructed as an individualized actor with specific material interests regarding trade with India. The Secretariat is constructed as a neutral facilitator and advisor. This gives the normative content of its statements (described in detail in the next chapter) an air of impartiality. It is important to note, that the statements of the Secretariat are not taken to be statements of "the WTO." The WTO is not abstracted into a unified actor in these documents, but the Secretariat, an integral component of the WTO, is.

Three roles in the meetings are personalized with names as well as nationalities. Despite being named, the Indian representative fills a role similar to that of all of the unnamed member representatives. They speak for their government, not for themselves. In contrast, the discussant and chairperson are clearly understood to *not* speak for their countries, even though their nationalities are given. The discussant is the most personalized of all speakers, because their role is to provide their own personal assessment of India's economic policies. Ostensibly, this view does not reflect the official view of their country. The chairperson is understood to neither express their own opinion or the positions of their country, but acts as a facilitator and interpreter of other speaker's statements.

The second half of this chapter broke down breaks down the statements in the meetings by speaker and size (in terms of wordcount) without addressing their content. These are aggregated in different instances by the role of the speaker (i.e. whether they represented a WTO member other than India), and in the case of those representing WTO members, by categorizing the member they represented (i.e. developmental status, region, membership in a particular faction). The trade volume of member economies with India is used as a rough proxy for the importance of their trade with India and compared to wordcounts for the years 2002 and 2007.

Perhaps the most striking feature of these numerical descriptions is speaking volume of developed country representatives, compared to those from developing countries. Members of the Quad faction were especially well represented. This is interesting, since the Quad is often seen as dominating the agenda of the WTO (see chapter 2). Members of the Cairns Group were also noticeably vocal.

The lack of speaking volume for the representatives of some of India's most important trading partners, especially China and a number of Middle Eastern countries, is also notable. In particular, no representative for the United Arab Emirates spoke in any of the three meetings, despite the UAE being 4th largest trade partner by value in 2002 and 5th in 2007 and it being a member of the WTO since 1996. Some of the representatives of India's lesser trading partners, especially New Zealand, spoke at much greater length than representatives of members with much higher trade volumes. These comparisons are merely descriptive and suggestive. They especially do not take into account the size of the economy trading with India (for a very small economy, a relatively low volume of India's trade might appear much more important relative to the size of their economies). At the very least, however, they suggest that the amount that a WTO member trades with India is not the only factor influencing how much their representatives speak at these meetings.

Chapter 6: Major TPR Themes: Logics of Liberalization

The proceeding chapter laid out the basic structure and context of the three TPRs of interest to this project, and examined the relative contributions of the various speakers (in the Meeting Minutes) mainly in terms of wordcount. In this chapter and the next, we will look at the thematic content of the TPRs. This chapter will identify and examine the general themes running through the critiques of Indian economic policy, while chapter 7 will focus on agriculture in particular. The narrative of the TPRs was one of universal praise for the liberalization program which India had begun in 1991. Not as universal, but still dominant was the addendum that this program was incomplete and must be continued.

The Positive Consensus on Liberalization

Throughout the TPRs, the efficacy of liberal reform was uncontroversial, especially in regard to the reforms already undertaken. This considerably narrowed the scope of critique. The dominant narrative running through all three TPRs was that India owed its recent economic success to its liberalization program and it thus followed that more reform would lead to more success. "Reform" and "liberalization" were used almost interchangeably. Wherever reforms are mentioned it is invariably in reference to liberal reforms – i.e. lowering trade barriers, privatization of state-run-enterprises, deregulation of industries, removal of price controls, etc.

Where differences over liberalization did emerge, this was on the topic of future reforms, particularly over the pace and selectivity of such reforms. For the purposes of this analysis, I will classify these opposing viewpoints as the Strong Liberalization and Weak Liberalization arguments (although it is probably more accurate to think of them as two poles on a continuum than as discrete categories). The Secretariat and many speakers in the Meeting took the strong position, arguing for liberalization to be sped up and extended to more areas of the economy. The Indian Government and other Meeting speakers (especially those representing developing countries) took the weaker position on liberalization. They expressed the view that reforms should be implemented carefully to avoid socioeconomic disruption and that there were legitimate exceptions to logic of liberalization in some areas of economic life (especially in the agricultural sector). In no case, however, were liberal reforms compared unfavorably to the policies which they had replaced.

The Strong and Weak Arguments are laid out in Table 6.1. Labeling them ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ is only an indication of to what extent they push for liberalization – it is not meant to suggest any difference in the merit of the arguments.

Table 6.1: Characteristics of the Strong and Weak Arguments for Liberalization

Argument	Speakers	Logic	Recommendations
Strong Liberalization	Secretariat, Meeting Chair & Discussant, Some Member Representatives	Liberalization -> Growth -> Development	Faster liberalization, extension of liberalization to more areas of economy
Weak Liberalization	Indian Government, Some Member Representatives	L -> G -> D with qualifications and exceptions, including for agriculture	Caution, Consensus, Exceptions

The Secretariat Reports praise liberalization and call for it to be implemented faster and more thoroughly. They generally attribute economic successes (see below) to these reforms while attributing failures to reforms not going far enough. The Indian Government Reports also attribute successes to the reform program and announce additional planned reforms. They, however, are more cautious about liberalization, emphasizing risk mitigation, autonomy, and a continued strong role for the state in the economy. The speakers in the Meetings sometimes formulated their comments as praise, sometimes as critique, but usually a mixture of the two along the lines of 'recent reforms have been good, but more are needed.'

The Straight Arrow of Reform

The conflation of "reform" and "liberalization" carried with it the implication that reform only went in one direction – towards increasingly economic liberalization. In the Secretariat Reports in particular, the wording often suggests a linear process with an identifiable end state, exemplified by the frequent use of the term 'progress,' as in the following quotes (italics mine):

> Some *progress* has also been made in the removal of state controls on the inter-state movement of certain grains and of administered prices (WTO 1998a: 15)
>
> Less *progress* has been made on reducing direct and indirect assistance to various sectors of the economy (WTO 2007a: x).
>
> Public sector reform… has been *delayed* by a decision in July 2006 to keep all decisions on disinvestment in state-owned enterprises on hold pending a review (WTO 2007a: x).
>
> …state-owned enterprises remain a considerable demand on government resources and the recent decision to "*pause*" privatization will have implications for future government support for these enterprises (WTO 2007a: vii).

India's reforms are frequently referred to in terms of being unfinished. In its 2002 report, the Secretariat says the following:

> While the process of dismantling some of India's complex system of trade and domestic controls has already yielded considerable results, there is a need for domestic structural reforms to be deepened and *completed* (WTO 2002a: italics mine).

In the 2007 meeting minutes, the Indian representative (the Indian Secretary of Commerce G.K. Pillai) made an apologetic defense of the perceived slowness of Indian liberalization: "In a vibrant and complex democracy such as India, the reform process could and would have some fits and starts, but the overall *direction* of reforms had always been *positive*" (2007c: 3; italics mine).

Economic Triumphalism and Indian Exceptionalism

The representatives of the Indian government in the three TPRs (in the Government Reports and in their comments in the meeting minutes) expressed a triumphant optimism about India's economy, despite acknowledging serious problems. These expressions included not only pride in what had already been accomplished, but also expectations that success would continue and that problems would be overcome. Additionally, the Reports emphasized that reforms were undertaken voluntarily and that they were tailored to the unique characteristics of the Indian economy. This sentiment of autonomy was most strongly expressed in 2007.

In that year's Government Report, statistical boasts about India's growth and economic rankings are frontloaded and constitute the very first paragraph.

> The Indian economy is the second fastest growing economy among the large economies of the world today. In terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) GDP, India is the fourth largest economy after the US, China and Japan. India's share in world GDP (PPP) basis has increased from 4.3% in 1991 to almost 6% in 2005. The World Bank has reported that India has been in the top 10% of all countries in growth performance since the 1980s (WTO 2007b: 5).[9]

The second section of the same report, entitled 'Future Growth Prospects,' further notes that India's growth rates are not only high but increasing over time, up to almost 9% in the years 2003- 2006. The report interprets this optimistically as "a sign that the economy has cleaved

[9] Dating India's remarkable growth performance back to the 1980s may be a subtle assertion that it predated the liberalization period, but is more likely just an artifact of the World Bank statistics being used.

from its past and has entered a phase of higher growth" (WTO 2007b: 5). That is, growth is not only high now, but will continue to be high in the future. In the meeting of the same TPR, the Indian representative expressed similar optimism that current high growth rates were only the beginning (WTO 2007c: 3- 6).

The argument for the long-term sustainability of a high growth rate is based a small number of perceived exceptional factors present in the Indian economy. The 2007 Government report states:

> There exists strong evidence to believe that the economy is being propelled by strong fundamental growth impulses which would sustain in the years to come. These impulses stem from the strengths exhibited by the economy (WTO 2007b: 5).

These strengths were enumerated as: a liberal trade /investment regime (or "openness"), a growing middle class, a vast and growing population of working-age people, competitive companies, and a high (and increasing) savings rate. Openness was connected to competitiveness in that international competition was seen as strengthening Indian firms. The growing ratio of working age people to total population (referred to as the "demographic dividend" – see below) was seen as not only increasing the size of the labor force, but also as contributing to the growth of personal savings. Finally, the expansion of the middle class was expected to provide the growing consumer demand to operationalize firms and labor (WTO 2007b: 5- 7). The statement of the Indian representative in the subsequent meeting added to this the argument that in addition to being large and rapid, Indian growth was also exceptionally stable:

> Growth in India had not only sustained itself at a high rate but also had exhibited low volatility and strong immunity to economic shocks. An IMF working paper, "From 'Hindu Growth' to Productivity Surge: The Mystery of the Indian Growth Transition" stated that between 1980 and 1999, India "outperformed all regions, save East Asia, in terms of

> average growth, and outperformed all regions, including East Asia, in terms of the stability of growth" (World Bank 2006, cited in WTO 2007b: 10).

The representative's statement went on to assert that the "rise of India would engender enormous benefits for the rest of the world" (WTO 2007c: 6). In particular, it was credited with creating a vast new consumer market, as well as investment opportunities. This added rhetorical leverage to the Indian government's request for greater market access from its trading partners by implying that India's growth was in their long-term economic interests:

> India's prosperity and that of the rest of the world were closely intertwined. The world needed a buoyant, thriving Indian economy; it was in the rest of the world's best interest (WTO 2007c: 6).

In the 2007 TPR, the Indian government notably puts positive spins on some issues most often perceived as problems to be overcome. For instance, in the meeting, Pillai painted India's negative balance of trade as a sign of its economic openness (WTO 2007c: 3- 4). Even service imports, he noted, were growing faster than service exports (5), belying any complaints that India's economy was not opening quickly or extensively enough.

In 2007, Pillai downplayed concerns about lack of foreign direct investment (FDI) by noting that while low in absolute terms, FDI had increased rapidly in relative terms over the previous three years, indicating a surge in investor confidence:

> FDI equity inflow had increased from US$2.22 billion in 2002/03 to US$16 billion in 2006/07, a staggering increase of 725%. If reinvested retained earnings were included, in line with international practice, FDI into India had reached US$19 billion in 2006/07, constituting 2.3% of GDP, a quantum jump compared to 0.5% of GDP three years earlier (WTO 2007c: 5).

The Government Report for that year asserted that "The fast increase of FDI was a strong indication of the effectiveness of India's policies" (WTO 2007b: 6) and further argued that previously low levels of FDI highlighted the strength of indigenous companies:

> The growth in the industrial sector has hitherto been with low levels of FDI, which is reflective of a strong indigenous entrepreneurial sector. A modernizing capital market; an increasingly liberal and competitive environment for investment, trade and production; a wealth of entrepreneurial talent and sustained economic growth has spawned strong new companies and supported the expansion of the aggressive among the existing (WTO 2007b: 6).

Rapid population increase is also given a positive spin. The huge proportion of young people in the population was touted as a "demographic dividend" that would enhance India's explosive economic growth in the future:

> According to most population projections, the share of the working age population in the total population will continue to rise for the next 30 years or so. These demographics point to an augmented supply of labour and savings. These demographic trends have also helped raise household savings from 15-16 percent of GDP in the late 1980's to 22-24 percent in recent years (WTO 2007b: 6).

In the subsequent meeting, the discussant expresses a note of skepticism about the potential of India's young population: "While this would provide a ready supply of labour, creating sufficient jobs would become an enormous challenge" (WTO 2007c: 7). The Indian government was cognizant of this problem and its plans to provide employment for this vast population hinged upon a major expansion of manufacturing, facilitating a sectoral migration from agriculture to industry. This will be further elaborated below.

Positive Consensus on Liberalization in the Meetings

Almost all of the member representatives at the three TPRs commented favorably upon India's liberalization. Some of these took the form of glowing acclaim:

> The representative of <u>Chinese Taipei</u> [the official WTO designation for Taiwan] commended India's economic performance since its last Review, and noted that such

> outstanding performance was due mainly to India's unilateral trade and structural reforms (WTO 2007c: 13).

Others were more reserved, but expressed general approval.

> Singapore welcomed India's commitment to a more open and liberal economy (WTO 2002c: 19).

Many indicated their approval of liberal reforms mainly by urging that they be continued.

> She urged India to continue reforms to maintain its economic growth (WTO 2007c: 18, representative of Uruguay).

While a few buried their approval within an overall critique:

> While India had taken important steps to bring its regime into compliance with the WTO, its overall trade regime remained among the most protectionist of all WTO Members (WTO 1998c: 14, representative of the United States).

The closest any comments came to disapproval of liberalization was by omission and qualification. A few scattered comments complimented India's recent economic performance *without* specifically attributing causation to liberalization:

> He was appreciative of India's successful economic development recently with respect to its policies with minimum social costs (WTO 1998c: 19, representative of Cuba).
>
> The representative of Bangladesh appreciated India's economic performance in spite of the global economic slowdown (WTO 2002c: 22).
>
> The representative of Egypt commended India for its recent economic achievements, and noted that there were still challenges (WTO 2007c: 18).

Lack of references does not necessarily imply that the speakers attributed economic success to something other than liberalization. An additional handful of comments, however, explicitly expressed the belief that reforms were 'partially' responsible for economic growth and other successes. This does suggest that other factors than liberal reforms were seen to have contributed to India's economic successes.

> This growth was due, in part, to continued structural reforms, including trade liberalization, which had fostered competition, raised efficiency, and had contributed greatly to alleviating poverty and reducing infant mortality (WTO 2002c: 3, Chairperson Mohamed).
>
> Structural reform, including trade liberalization, had played a role in India's high growth rate in recent years (WTO 2007c: 11, representative of New Zealand).
>
> The representative of Turkey acknowledged that trade liberalization was one of the main reasons behind India's impressive economic growth (WTO 2007c: 19).
>
> The economic growth, and the consequent improvement in the standard of living, was attributed partly to the growing opening up of the Indian economy to competition (WTO 2007c: 17, representative of Chile).

Two comments during the 2007 Meeting added to this trope of 'partial causation' by dating India's economic success story to before 1991 (the conventionally accepted beginning of India's liberalization). First, "The representative of Colombia commended India's economic performance in the past 25 years" (WTO 2007c: 15), indicating the early 1980s as a starting point. The representative did, however, immediately follow this by calling for a standard list of liberal reforms. The next speaker was more explicit about the timeline point:

> The representative of Brazil stated that India's impressive economic performance was not a recent phenomenon. Between 1980 and 2002, the country's economy had grown on average at 6% annually, making India one of the best-performing nations in the last quarter of the 20th century (WTO 2007c: 15).

Unlike most of the comments, the rest of the Brazilian representative's 2007 commentary contained no advice for further liberalization.

Metrics of Success

Within the overall praise of reforms, various normative measures of policy success were used, ranging from very general to quite specific. Some of the shorter statements from member representatives in the Meetings, for instance, simply commended India for its recent "economic performance" without going into specifics. Similarly general statements referred to India's progress in "development" or sometimes just acknowledged that India had complied with its WTO obligations. More specific metrics of policy success included poverty reduction, improvements in social indicators like literacy, rising FDI, increasing exports, lower inflation, and job creation. The most common metric, however, was the growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Economic Growth

Growth, in terms of monetary value, was the metric of economic success used most often throughout the TPR documents. When achievement or lack of achievement was measured, it was usually in terms of comparison of aggregate monetary values among different time periods, with success indicated but the more recent figure being higher (in a few cases, such as government deficits, the reverse is true). This was applied to the Indian economy overall by comparing GDP for different years, and more specifically to indicators such as growth of specific sectors (here, importantly, the agricultural sector stands out for its lack of growth), growth of trade, growth of foreign investment, etc. When claims are made in these documents linking liberalization to economic success, it is thus usually in terms of growth. This is summed up in the following quotes from the 1998 and 2007 Secretariat Reports:

> The Indian Government initiated a major programme of economic reform and liberalization in 1991, reversing a policy direction followed for decades… These reforms

> contributed to a dramatic increase in growth in the 1990s, accompanied by larger flows of inward foreign investment and increased international trade (WTO 1998a: xi).
>
> India's high rates of economic growth in recent years are the result of significant structural reforms including trade liberalization. If this fast growth is to be sustained, however, further reform will be required (WTO 2007a: xii).

GDP growth was similarly the most common attribute singled out for praise in the Meetings and here it was also usually attributed to liberalization (in general or to specific reforms), as in the following sampling of comments:

> The reforms initiated voluntarily in 1991/92 had resulted in GDP growth rates averaging 7% per year until 1996/97 (WTO 1998c: 3, representative of India).
>
> The representative of Switzerland noted that India's courageous policy since 1991 had led to spectacular growth during the last few years (WTO 1998c: 12)
>
> [India] had been helped onto a higher growth path by the discontinuation of the special import licensing scheme; trade facilitation measures; reforms in tax administration, exchange market, industrial licencing, and in banking and insurance; and reforms in the control system in petroleum, sugar, agriculture, and in infrastructure, such as telecommunications and power (WTO 2002c: 23, representative of Sri Lanka).
>
> The representative of Pakistan commended India's reform process, which had resulted in fast economic growth (WTO 2007c: 17).

A complete accounting of statements to this effect, made by member representatives, is as follows:

> 1998: representatives of Canada (WTO 1998c: 9), Australia (10), Switzerland (12), the EU (12), Norway (15), Mexico (17), and Pakistan (18)
>
> 2002: representatives of Switzerland (WTO 2002: 13), Mauritius (20), Jamaica (21), Sri Lanka (23), Honduras (23), Cuba (25), and Zimbabwe (26)[10]
>
> 2007: representatives of New Zealand (WTO 2007c: 11), Argentina (17), Chile (17), Turkey (17), Pakistan (17), Nicaragua (18), and Zimbabwe (19).[11]

[10] The representatives of Zimbabwe and Jamaica each technically only juxtaposed praise of liberalization and growth in the same sentence, without explicitly attributing causation.
[11] Some of these were partial attributions; see *Positive Consensus* above.

Here and there a few comments praised India's economic growth without specifically mentioning liberal reforms (WTO 2002c: 19, representative of Singapore; 20, representative of Mauritius; WTO 2007c: 18, representatives of Benin and Nicaragua).

From Liberalization to Growth to Development

Other measurements of success were often described as an outcome of growth. For example the first paragraph of the 2007 Secretariat Report asserts that: "Rapid economic growth has translated into an improvement in social indicators, including a decline in infant mortality, a reduction in the percentage of the population living below the poverty line and improvements in literacy, sanitation and access to clean water." This is immediately followed by the assertion that "This impressive performance is largely due to unilateral trade and structural reform" (WTO 2007a: vii). We see here a serial functional dependency that is common throughout the TPRs. The logic is that liberalization leads to economic growth and that economic growth enables a whole set of other improving societal indicators, which for convenience we can subsume under the vague label of "development" (the use of the concept of development is addressed in the next section). Sometimes the serial dependency is described completely in the TPR text, sometimes partially – i.e. 'liberalization leads to growth' or 'growth leads to development.' This formulation is not used by all commenters, but it is never contradicted.

Usage of "Develop"

The concept of 'development,' to refer to positive economic transformation taking place in linear stages, was used frequently throughout the TPRs. Its variations, 'developed' and 'developing' (and in a few instances 'least developed') were used as descriptive labels to classify member states. These two groups were often described as having differing interests; developing countries especially were ascribed specific blanket interests in many of the comments. What these interests are perceived as being is discussed later in the chapter.

The usage of *development* as a process changed in a subtle way through the three TPRS. In 1998, it is most often described as something that could be achieved through liberalization, while in later TPS (during the Doha *Development* Round) it is more often portrayed as related but separate process, which liberalization had to be adapted to or accommodated by. In 1998, development was used in this sense and in describing the whole economy (not just one part, such as infrastructural or rural development) by at least 8 speakers, including discussant Chak-Mun See and 7 member representatives. Of these, five argued for liberalization as a key to development (although only the last three used the term 'liberalization'):

> A trade policy based on "greater openness" contributed directly to improved economic performance and development; this would appear to be confirmed by India's own experience as it had achieved higher growth rates since 1991 (WTO 1998c: 9, representative of Canada).
>
> He encouraged the Indian Government to continue the reforms as this was the best way to maintain effective growth and to contribute to the development of the Indian economy (12, representative of Switzerland).
>
> He remained convinced that further comprehensive liberalization, rather than policies based on protection and restriction of trade, were in India's long-term interest for economic development (14, representative of the EU).
>
> Further liberalization of trade through reductions in tariff and non-tariff measures would benefit India's economic development (15, representative of Norway).
>
> Hungary's experiences showed that consistent liberalization was a major factor to maintain sustainable economic development (15, representative of Hungary).

Three other speakers, discussant See (5) and the representatives of Cuba (19) and Mauritius (22) used the term without linking it directly to arguments for liberalization.

In 2002, development in the whole economy sense was used more often than in 1998 – by 12 speakers, including 9 member representatives - and less often in connection to liberalization. The very existence of the Doha Development Round could be seen as a tacit acknowledgement that the Uruguay Round had not addressed development concerns and by extension that liberalization alone could not ensure development. A number of other 2002 comments used the term development in such a way as to imply a separate existence from straightforward liberalization, including the representatives of India (4, 6, 8, 29), Hong Kong (16), New Zealand (18), Mauritius (20), and Cuba (25). Where a connection between liberalization and development was made, they did not use the word liberalization, but rather 'trade.'

> India realized that international trade played a vital part role in economic development, and could be an effective instrument for raising growth, creating jobs, and alleviating poverty (WTO 2002c: 3, Chairperson Mohamed).
>
> Noting that the EU had spent €2 billion in development cooperation with India since 1976, and that and the current gross annual allocation for India amounted to about €80 million, he stated that new programmes would be prepared, inter alia, on trade and investment development, directly linked to the DDA (15, representative of the EU).
>
> The Secretariat Report noted that, despite progress, there were a variety barriers to trade and investment that still created important distortions to competition, and were potential impediments to India's long-term development (18, representative of the US).
>
> The representative of Hungary commended India for its economic reforms and trade policy based on greater openness, which had contributed to improved economic performance and development (22).

There was an interesting variation on this development-through-trade concept, where a few speakers used it to critique India's developed trade partners rather than India (11, discussant Whelan; 24, representative of Sri Lanka; 36, Chairperson Mohamed). We will come back to this observation in the section *Market Access* below.

Whole economy development was utilized by 9 speakers in 2007. Again, some argued for the positive role of liberalization in development, they tended to do so with more qualifying nuance:

> Trade policy could play an important role in reinforcing social development, for example, through the creation of secured employment in export-oriented sectors and industries, as well as through supporting environmental objectives (WTO 2007c: 12, representative of the EU).
>
> The representative of <u>Mexico</u> noted two basic lessons learnt from India's economic development. The first was that when structural reforms were applied properly, countries could grow quickly. The second was that these reforms, including internal and external reforms, such as trade and investment liberalization, should not be held back (13).
>
> The timely completion of the DDA Round should come as a first trade policy priority for both developed and developing countries. It would thus be the best way to boost the development of India, as well as that of all other developing countries (27, representative of the EU).

The first conceptualizes economic and social development as distinct, if overlapping; while the second makes a caveat for 'properly applied' reform. Picking up on the argument in the 2007 Secretariat Report (see above), three speakers expressed concerns that India had an inadequate tax base to finance the public investment necessary for development (7, discussant Ric Guth; 10, representative of Brunei/ ASEAN; 30, Chairperson Vesa Himanen). Other references to whole-economy development were made by the representatives of India (3, 5, 6, 23, 24, 25), United States (15), China (18), Hong Kong (28), and Zimbabwe (19).

Developed countries as an interest group were only mentioned three times in the 1998 Meeting, twice by the representative of India (WTO 1998c: 3, 31) and once by the representative of New Zealand (10), always in connection to the issue of agricultural subsidies. The 2002 Meeting saw nine uses of this term, mostly by the representative of India (WTO 2002c: 7- 8, 30, 32), but also by those of Hong Kong (16) and Sri Lanka (24), and also in the chairperson's summary statement (36); these comments mentioned textiles and other concerns as well as agricultural subsidies. ‘Developed countries’ or some variation was used 16 times in 2007, 13 in the comments of the representative of India (3- 6), once each in the comments of the discussant (8) and the representatives of Brazil (16) and the European Union (27).

The term developing countries or sometimes ‘developing world’ was much more ubiquitous throughout: It was used 18 times in 1998, by the representatives of India (WTO 1998c: 3- 4, 21, 30), the European Union (13), Egypt (17), Brazil (18), Nigeria (18- 19), and the Dominican Republic (19); and by both discussants (5- 7). It was used 36 times in 2002 (the year after the initiation of the Doha “Development” Round), by the representatives of India (7, 30, 32- 33), Canada (12), Uruguay (14), Colombia (16), Hong Kong (16- 17), Brazil (17), New Zealand (18), Mauritius (20), Jamaica (22), Honduras (23), Sri Lanka (24), Cuba (25), Botswana (26- 27), and Morocco (26). 2007 saw 22 uses, almost all by the representative of India (5- 6, 20, 22, 25), but also by the representatives of the European Union (13, 27), the United States (15), and Uruguay (18).

Reference was made to ‘Least Developed Countries’ or LDCs only once in 2002, by the representative of Cuba (WTO 2002c: 25) and five times in 2007: by the chair (WTO 2007c: 30), the discussant (26), and by the representatives of India (20), the EU (13), and Mali (19). All of these were in reference to preferential trade access for LDCs.

Bringing in Poverty

References to poverty seemed to increase in the TPR Meetings after the Doha ‘Development’ Round began. Poverty is only mentioned three times in the 1998 Meeting (only by the discussant and the chair, always in connection to agriculture), but it is mentioned 18 times in 2002 and 15 times in 2007. These references to poverty can be roughly divided into three discursive groups (with some overlap): 1) statements simply noting the existence of poverty; 2) those which note that poverty has been reduced; and 3) those suggesting that poverty would or could be reduced in the future. Table 6.2 describes this in greater detail.

Table 6.2: Mentions of Poverty

	1998 Meeting	2002 Meeting	2007 Meeting
Poverty observed	discussant #2 (Wells)	chair	India, discussant, EU
Poverty reduction observed		chair, discussant, India, Philippines, Mauritius, Jamaica, Honduras	discussant, EU, Sri Lanka, Mali
Future poverty reduction referenced	discussant #2 (Wells), chair	chair, India, EU, Jamaica	Chair, Brunei, New Zealand, EU, Mexico

Very few statements pointed out the existence of poverty without referring to its reduction or possible future reduction. And almost all those that did were made by speakers whom elsewhere made statements of the latter two types. Overall, but especially in 2002, most statements regarding poverty referred to its reduction:

> The representative noted that it was important to see economic progress also through the prism of social development. The incidence of poverty, as a percentage of people living below the poverty line had declined from 36% to 26% (WTO 2002c: 4, representative of India)
>
> India deserved congratulations for the appreciable gains in poverty eradication, from 34% to 26% between 1993/94 and 1999/00 (WTO 2002c: 19, representative of the Philippines).
>
> India had paid attention to the development challenge as part of its economic reforms. The number of people living below the poverty line had been halved in the past 20 years (WTO 2007c: 12, representative of the EU).

Where poverty reduction was noted, this was sometimes attributed to liberalization:

> India's more open trade policies had contributed to improved social welfare and the alleviation of poverty (WTO 2007c: 18, representative of Sri Lanka).

or to growth:

> As the period under review had witnessed strong economic growth, there had been parallel developments in social policy, including reductions in the percentage of people living below the poverty line; improvements in infant mortality rates; an increase in literacy rates; and a modest increase in employment (WTO 2002c: 9, disscussant Whelan).
>
> The rapid growth had been accompanied by an improvement in several social indicators, including a decline in infant mortality, a reduction of absolute poverty, as well as improvements in literacy, and health conditions (WTO 2007c: 7, Discussant Guth).

In a few statements, a logical dependency was explicity laid out linking all three terms in the form of 'liberalization causes growth, growth reduces poverty.' This sentiment is stated most clearly in the summary remarks of the chairs of the 2002 and 2007 Meetings:

> Members all agreed that India's economic performance has been impressive, with GDP growth averaging over 7% between 2001/02 (fiscal year, April-March) and 2006/07; growth has been particularly rapid since 2003, averaging over 8.5% and has translated into improved social indicators, including a reduction in the percentage of the population living below the poverty line. They attributed this impressive performance mainly to structural reforms, including unilateral trade liberalization, such as reductions in applied tariffs (WTO 2007c: 30, Chairperson Himanen).
>
> Members commended India for its strong economic performance over the past decade, with growth at an average 6% a year and a reduction in poverty. They noted that this resulted, in great part, from continued economic reforms, including trade liberalization, lower government involvement in the economy and liberalization of key services sectors (WTO 2002: 35, Chairperson Mohamed).

The following two quotes are the clearest statements exemplifying this logic on the parts of member representatives, in *reference to what had already been achieved*:

> The representative of <u>Honduras</u> said that India's policy reforms had resulted in high economic growth over the past years. There had been a positive impact on growth and poverty reduction through the elimination of licences and of QRs on balance-of-payments grounds, together with greater investment liberalization, a less restrictive industrial policy, reform of telecommunications, the financial sector, and other key areas, and tariff policies that were consistent at the regional level (WTO 2002: 23).
>
> The representative of <u>Cuba</u> noted India's efforts to comply with its WTO obligations, and welcomed the economic and trade reform it had undertaken. These measures had contributed to high economic growth, and more stable trade regime, but also to improving social development indicators (WTO 2002c: 25).

This quote from the representative of Jamaica would also qualify, but only if we take juxtaposition to imply causation:

> Since 1991, India had embarked on a far-reaching economic reform programme, and had been able to achieve strong economic growth. Other economic and social indicators such as inflation, foreign exchange reserves, exports, poverty, and employment had also improved (WTO 2002: 21, representative of Jamaica).

More comments used the same three-step logical dependency, but in relation to what could be achieved under conditions of future liberalization instead of current successes (see below).

A handful of statements mentioned 'standards of living,' which in this context of India can be read as a reference to poverty.

> The representative of Nicaragua commended India's extraordinary economic growth, which had been translated into improved living standards (WTO 2007c: 18).

The representative of Chile in the 2007 Meeting made a similar statement, which however only 'partly' attributed improved living standards to growth (WTO 2007c: 17, see above). The 1998 representative of the United States (WTO 1998c: 14) and the 2002 representative of Barbados (WTO 2002c: 26) spoke of India's *efforts* to improve living standards, but did not indicate whether or not they thought that these had been successful.

More general references to India's 'development' may also be taken as indirect proxies for discussion of poverty, although with less confidence (see below). For a discussion of agricultural poverty, see chapter 7.

Metrics of Future Success

Speakers at the TPR Meetings often referred not only to the GDP growth and poverty reduction India had already achieved, but also the improvement of these and other metrics that *could be* achieved, often in line with the liberalization -> growth -> poverty reduction trope. Expectations of future growth were usually accompanied by an 'if' proposition indicating that it was conditional upon further liberalization:

> A balanced, outward-looking framework, including the removal of barriers on imports generally and not only those directly related to subsequent exports, would reinforce the basis for sustained growth (WTO 1998c: 9, representative of Canada).
>
> He encouraged the Indian Government to continue the reforms as this was the best way to maintain effective growth and to contribute to the development of the Indian economy (WTO 1998c: 12, representative of Switzerland).
>
> India was optimistic that, through comprehensive reforms in core sectors, including agriculture, the coming years would witness higher growth (WTO 2002c: 4, representative of India).
>
> She urged India to continue reforms to maintain its economic growth (WTO 2007c: 18, representative of Uruguay).

Future poverty reduction was, in turn, often portrayed as dependent on growth.

> To achieve further significant cuts in poverty, the Government was currently targeting growth of between 7% and 9%, substantially higher than the rate of 5.4% expected in 2001/02 (WTO 2002C: 3, Chairperson Mohamed).
>
> …to achieve further significant reduction in poverty, India needed higher GDP growth (WTO 2002c: 15).
>
> High growth in the medium term was expected to double per capita income over the next ten years, and to reduce poverty ratios significantly (WTO 2002c: 27).
>
> He expressed the confidence that, as high growth rates were to be sustained in the coming years, India would be able to address its social and economic needs, and to meet the challenges of poverty alleviation and of human capital development (WTO 2007c: 10, representative for Brunei, speaking on behalf of ASEAN).

A few speakers explicitly laid out all three steps of the liberalization -> growth -> poverty reduction trope in series (a variation on the three-step dependency described above).

> In its five-year development plan for 2002-07, India acknowledged the need for further economic reforms to ensure sustained economic development and poverty reduction (WTO 2002c: 22, representative of Jamaica).

> I think we all agree that India needs to do more if growth targets are to be met and a serious dent is to be made in the still high rate of poverty. In this regard, Members gave India their full support for its efforts to reform the economy (WTO 2002c: 36, Chairperson Mohamed).

> Continued and deepened reform was the best way towards a sustainable level of growth and a reduction of poverty (WTO 2007c: 11, representative of New Zealand).

"Trade Engine of growth": Exports and Jobs

When speakers went beyond the simple expressions of liberalization leading to further growth and growth reducing poverty, they often filled in the blanks with trade and jobs. Growth in trade would contribute to growth in GDP, while increasing exports would provide jobs, which would lift people out of poverty. Trade was sometimes referred to as an 'engine of growth' in this context.

> Given the size of India's GDP, there appeared to be high potential for India to use external trade as an engine of growth. External trade still accounted for a relatively low share in the Indian economy (20% of GDP)… Trade could not be used as an engine of growth as long as the Indian Government maintained a relatively high effective tariff rate, and a restrictive import licensing system (WTO 1998c: 5, Discussant See).

> Colombia, like India, believed that exports were an engine for growth, and welcomed India's policy in this area (WTO 2002c: 16).

> The EU agreed with India that there was an important linkage between trade and economic growth. Fewer restrictions and further structural reform would help India to raise its share in world trade, thus increasing its annual real economic growth rates, which would contribute in tackling its domestic problems (WTO 2002c: 15).

Other statements tied trade, specifically exports, to job creation:

> The major goal and key focus of India's trade policy was to increase exports and to generate employment (WTO 2007c: 8, Discussant Guth).

Two other comments to this effect have already been quoted in the *Usage of "Development"* section above. Chairperson Mohamed in 2002 described trade as "an effective instrument… creating jobs, and alleviating poverty" (WTO 2002c: 3), while the 2007 EU representative suggested that trade would promote "the creation of secured employment in export-oriented sectors and industries" (WTO 2007c: 12). A few commenters in the 2007 Meeting, especially discussant Guth, tied their concerns about job creation to India's growing working-age population, thus adding an extra sense of urgency:

> India also had one of the youngest populations. While this would provide a ready supply of labour, creating sufficient jobs would become an enormous challenge (WTO 2007c: 7, discussant Guth).
>
> With its large population, India needed to address issues such as the uniform application of employment standards, continued job creation, and improvement of skills, all of which required innovative and sensitive responses (12, representative of the EU).
>
> Solving the problem of unemployment was the most important challenge, particularly as India was the second most populated country in the world (15, representative of Colombia).

Above we saw that the Indian government had put a positive spin on this (as the 'demographic dividend') in the 2007 Government Report and in the comments of Representative Pillai in the Meeting. The representative of Colombia went on to endorse this trope after expressing concerns about unemployment and population:

> India also had a vast supply of young people in the labour market, and its population would continue to be active to the year 2040. This young work force provided advantages not only in the labour supply, but also in saving rates, social security, and public finances (*ibid*).

The growth of the high tech service sector was emphasized in the TPRs, but a critical undercurrent emerged observing the smaller job-creation potential compared to sectors requiring less skilled labor. Part of the Indian government's triumphalism about its service industry concerned the creation of jobs in this sector, with Pillai noting that "Employment of professionals in the IT sector was estimated to have passed 1.5 million and was expected to reach 2.5 million by 2010" (WTO 2007c: 24). It was not lost on him, however, that high-skill service jobs only represented a small fraction of the Indian labor force. His earlier, extensive remarks on the agricultural sector included the fact that it "employed nearly 70% of the workforce" (5), while his defense of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) included the argument that they would not just facilitate capital-intensive industries: "The large number of textile, gems, and leather SEZs to be established would provide employment for a less skilled labour force" (21). Other meeting participants also expressed concern about the capacity of the non-service economy to provide jobs:

> …the policy on industrial incentives should be reviewed to ensure the objective of promoting labour-intensive activities, in particular if capital-intensive industries located in the economic zones were involved (10, representative of Brunei/ ASEAN).
>
> Despite progress already made, the services sector had much further potential. However, the agriculture and manufacturing sectors were equally significant for employment opportunities and balanced growth (12, representative of the EU).
>
> As agriculture employed a large part of the population, to integrate this population in the globalization process would be the target of reforms (13, representative of Mexico).

In chapter 7, we will look in more detail at the idea of shifting labor from agriculture to manufacturing.

The Strong and Weak Arguments

The Cautious Pace: Consensus and Vulnerability

Throughout the TPRs, India was critiqued, by the Secretariat Report and by many of the speakers in the Meeting Minutes, for not pursuing its policy liberalizations at a more rapid pace. The Secretariat is especially insistent on this point in its first two reports. As noted above, the 1998 Secretariat Report concluded that: "The recent economic slowdown demonstrates the need for continued and even accelerated reforms" (WTO 1998a: vii). The 2002 report states:

> In order to achieve further significant reductions in poverty, India is currently targeting higher real GDP growth of between 7% and 9%... to meet this goal it will be important, as stressed by the authorities, to continue, and even accelerate, the reform process (WTO 2002a: 4).

The slow pace of liberalization was brought up at a few points in the meetings, most consistently by the United States delegations, which mentioned "a slowdown in trade liberalization" in 1998 (WTO 1998c: 14) and more critically in 2007:

> …the pace of reform has slowed over the past year, which, as predicted by many economists, had prevented India from achieving even greater economic growth (WTO 2007c: 14).

The few other delegations that made observations of the pacing of reforms were more qualified and less critical:

> …the pace of liberalization in India had been rather slow, except for capital goods and raw materials (WTO 1998c: 15, representative of Korea).
>
> While understanding India's gradual approach to economic reforms, Switzerland urged India to proceed as quickly and as sustainably as possible (WTO 2002c: 13).
>
> …in a democratic country where more than half of the population was in farming, a rapid change would not be realistic (WTO 2007c: 14, representative of Japan).

The most attention was given to the slow pace trope by the second discussant (Ric Wells of Australia) in 1998:

> …progress [in liberalization] had been slower than expected. While the Government of India had aimed at achieving an average tariff of 25% by 1997, the average tariff rate was currently 35%; liberalization of foreign investment in basic telecommunications had also been slower than planned; and agriculture remained heavily protected. In addition, trade liberalization had not been consistent with greater liberalization in investment, creating a tendency for investment to be a substitute rather than a complement to trade in some sectors. In services, some sectors had been more liberalized than others. He questioned the reasons for such uneven and sometimes slower than planned liberalization (WTO 1998c: 7).

He repeated this argument later in the meeting in response to the Indian delegation's closing remarks:

> The <u>second discussant</u> agreed with the need to see trade reforms in the broader context of general reforms. Nevertheless, it was important for trade reforms to keep pace;

> comments had been made on a disparity in the pace of investment and trade liberalization in some sectors (WTO 1998c: 21).

Later in the chapter, critiques of the rates of liberalization in specific sector will be examined further.

The Indian government defended the cautious pace of its reforms in terms of democratic compromise:

> Reforms… have a greater chance of success when they are perceived as pro-people and public opinion regarding them is favourable. A consensual approach therefore has to be evolved taking into account the democratic and federal structure of the country. The gradual, but continuous progress in reforms, in spite of successive changes in Government, should be looked at in this backdrop (WTO 2002b: 5).

> the reforms undertaken had been carried out through a process of consultation and consensus, taking into account the varied needs of the different segments of the population, and within the framework of India's democratic and federal structure. India wanted the changes to be sequenced carefully and their implementation to be closely monitored so that they had positive support from all sections of society (WTO 2002c: 5).

> Democracies work slowly, but steadily, and the pace of reforms was the price paid for inclusive growth (WTO 2007c: 3).

The decentralized federal structure of the Indian government is noted as an impediment to liberalization in 2007 in both the Indian Government Report and the Secretariat Report. The Government Report explains:

> India had a Federal polity with the Central Government and the state governments having exclusive domain over various sectors with certain overlaps. In the past two decades, attention had also been paid to local self-government. The increased devolution of responsibilities to the local levels had increased complexities of administration (WTO 2007b: 3).

In reference to India's constitutional requirements for state government involvement in some trade and national economic policy, the Secretariat states:

> This requires continuous interaction between the Central and state governments and in some cases, such as changes in the structure of indirect taxation and electricity tariffs and provision, has led to delays in reform (WTO 2007a: viii).

The Indian representatives further defended the (relatively) slow pace in terms of managing risk. They noted in the 1998 meeting that India was "consciously avoiding the 'big bang' approach to economic reforms" and claimed that "the benefits and costs from each measure had been weighted keeping in mind the social cost" (WTO 1998c: 20). In the 2007 meeting, Indian Representative Pillai said in reference to the reform process:

> Stakeholders' interests had to be carefully weighed and balanced… policy shifts might lead to unintended consequences or unanticipated outcomes; the pace of reforms in a vibrant democracy was not as rapid as might be desirable. Building consensus and carrying political coalitions were not simple, but would yield robust policy reforms. Economic shocks and unrelated events often affected the reform process. In addition, policy reform now would have a bearing on the immediate future (WTO 2007c: 25).

Pillai emphasized the vulnerability of India's poor to market fluctuations. Certain price controls were defended on the grounds that:

> Even a small percentage variation in the demand or the supply of canalized items (such as petroleum products, fertilizers, edible oils, and cereals) could cause widespread distress; reliance on an entirely free market was considered an extremely risky proposition (WTO 1998c: 23).

The implication is that the instability and unpredictability of rapid policy changes would threaten the livelihoods of the vulnerable poor population. A cautious attitude toward reform was especially emphasized with regard to agriculture, as in this quote from the Indian representative in the 1998 meeting:

> The representative of India stated that almost three quarters of the population was dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. While reforms had taken place in the agricultural sector, the pace had been carefully calibrated so as to evaluate possible ramifications. (WTO 1998c: 24).

The construction and deployment of the vulnerable agricultural population will be examined in more detail in chapter 7.

Selectivity of Reforms

While calling for more rapid adoption of reforms, the Secretariat and various speakers in the meeting minutes also called for its extension to more areas of India's economy, particularly to agriculture and consumer goods. The argument for extension is frequently linked to observations about the growth rates of the different sectors of the Indian economy. Services have grown the fastest, manufacturing less rapidly, and agricultural very slowly; this is correlated in this argument to the amount of liberal reform each sector has undergone:

> Growth has been led by the services sector, where liberalization has been most rapid. Manufacturing has also performed well, although further growth may be impeded by infrastructure and other constraints. In contrast, agricultural growth continues to be slow and erratic and dependent on the weather, causing considerable distress, especially among small and marginal farmers (WTO 2007a: vii).
>
> Services have been the main engine of growth in recent years… largely due to greater progress in reforms, especially for certain services (WTO 2007a: xi).

The implication is that if liberalization led to growth in the service sector it would have the same effect on manufacturing and agriculture. With regard to the latter, this is in effect an argument against agricultural exceptionalism. We will come back to this in chapter 7.

The Indian government seems in many ways to be more cautious about manufacturing and especially agriculture than it is about services. Although India's representatives were not explicit in this regard, the 'vulnerable population' concept has some applicability to the sectoral reform observations. By the logic that haphazard liberalization endangers people living near subsistence, it can be extrapolated that by introducing the most radical liberal reforms in the service sector the Indian government is minimizing the risk to its population. Services employ only a small fraction of the population compared to manufacturing and especially to agriculture, and this population is certainly less economically vulnerable.[12] In any case, it must be emphasized that the 'more-to-less liberalization' observation is just that: services have undergone *more* liberalization, but the other two sectors, even agriculture, have also liberalized in far-reaching and radical ways.

Manufacturing had experienced rapid growth, but less (proportionally) than services. The 2007 Secretariat Report asserts that:

> …this can be attributed, in part, to continued structural reforms and a relaxation in licensing and FDI restrictions. The sector, however, continues to be protected by relatively high tariff barriers… Further growth in manufacturing is hampered also by a lack of infrastructure and labour market rigidities. (WTO 2007a: xii).

In his concluding remarks, the chairperson of the 2007 meeting stated:

> Some concerns were expressed about the development of the manufacturing sector, which is being held back by the complex customs duty structure, as well as the relatively high tariffs in textiles and clothing, and automobiles. Members remarked on the superior performance of India's services sector, where liberalization has been most rapid (WTO 2007c: 31).

By 'some members,' the chair is referring specifically to comments by the representatives of the United States, who also used the phrase "held back" in relation to India's manufacturing regulations (WTO 2007c: 14) and New Zealand, the only member that directly compared growth in services to growth in manufacturing with a connection to liberalization.

Autonomy

While the Secretariat and most member representatives reinforced the triumphalism of India's reform program with praise and statistical observations touting its success, these often

[12] The relative newness of many service industries may also explain the relative ease of liberalization here (new regulations could be designed from scratch rather than through the reform of old regulatory regimes).

distinguish themselves from the tone of the Indian representatives through pessimism about the sustainability of India's growth and skepticism about the specifics of India's reform model. Where the Indian representatives stressed the autonomy of their model and its unique context, the Secretariat and many members saw its success as the outcome of the application of orthodox principles of liberalization and its heterodox elements as its potential downfall.

The representatives of the Indian government, in both the Government Reports and in the meeting minutes, tended to stress the unique contexts of the Indian economy, with the implication that the standard, one-size-fits-all model of economic liberalization was not necessarily appropriate here. The opening statement of the Indian delegation during the 2007 meeting contained an assertion to this effect:

> As each country had its own genius, history, culture, economic, political, and social institutions, there could be no one-size-fits-all reforms… The manner in which reforms were implemented had to be country specific (WTO 2007c: 6).

Towards the end of the meeting, the Indian delegation ended its response remarks with:

> India would push ahead with its autonomous, custom-tailored reform programme, and expected the support of other Members would continue through recognizing and making accommodation for the inherent complexity of the process (WTO 2007c: 25).

The Indian government emphasized that these reforms were not adopted indiscriminately and they resist the notion pushed in the Secretariat Report that more and faster liberalization is always the solution. In describing the Eighth Five-year Plan (1992-1997), the 1998 Government Report states:

> …for India it was not a choice between market mechanism and planning, but that the challenge was to effectively dovetail the two, so that they are complementary to each other (WTO 1998a).

The Indian reports also stress the *autonomy* of these reforms, noting that they far exceed the levels of liberalization required of India under the WTO agreements. The 2007 Government

Report emphasized that “radical tariff liberalization” has been undertaken unilaterally “without attaching any conditions of reciprocity” on India’s trading partners (WTO 2007b: 15). There are also defensive assertions regarding the purview of the WTO:

> India is of the view that not all areas of economic activity can be made a subset of trade concerns for consideration in the WTO, since many of these areas have a development perspective (WTO 1998b: 7).

This distinction between ‘trade’ and ‘development’ perspectives implies some skepticism regarding the straightforward liberalization-leads-to-development trope of the Strong Liberalization Argument.

For the Secretariat and other speakers advocating a strong liberalization argument, it is India’s very autonomy which is seen as a hindrance to market efficiency. In this argument, the prerogative of a government to ‘change its mind’ on policy creates an environment of uncertainty and unpredictability. This unpredictability in turn discourages private investment. They repeatedly call for India to lock-in its liberal reforms by making them part of the next round of WTO agreements.

The strongest argument to this effect is made in regard to the “gap” that existed between the bound and applied rates of Indian tariffs on imports (this gap was significant throughout the period of these three TPRs):

> With the exception of a few applied tariffs, which are at their corresponding bound rates, the difference between the bound and applied tariff rates is considerable. This difference gives the Government considerable scope to raise applied tariffs, scope that was used to raise tariffs for some agricultural products in recent years (WTO 2007a: viii).

To understand this argument, we first need to explain the different between ‘bound’ and ‘applied’ tariff rates. Tariffs here are measured as a percentage of the value of imports. Under the Uruguay Round WTO agreements, maximum ceilings were set on the tariff rates India could charge on most of its imports. These are the ‘bound’ rates and the Indian government cannot charge a tariff higher than the bound rate for a product without violating its WTO obligations. Usually, however, it charges much lower tariffs, which are called the ‘applied’ rates. In short, bound tariff rates are the maximum that India *can* charge, while applied rates are those that it *does* charge. Part of the Indian government’s claim that its liberalization program has exceeded its WTO commitments is the fact that its applied tariff rates are far below its bound tariff rates.

The bound-applied gap received little attention in the 1998 TPR, but was featured much more prominently in 2002 and 2007. The 1998 Secretariat Report mentions it only in passing, without overt criticism:

> In both areas, thus, India, like most other developing countries, has put a ceiling on its protective structure, rather than binding it at effective levels, while pursuing unilateral liberalization (WTO 1998a: xiii).

The representative of the European Union was the only speaker in the 1998 TPR to criticize the bound-applied gap:

> Despite a considerable increase in the number of tariff lines bound, and a substantial lowering of the simple average effective tariff, a notable difference remained between the applied rate and the bound rate. For the sake of *predictability*, a narrowing of this gap was called for. (WTO 1998c: 13; italics mine)

Between 1998 and 2002, India raised some of its agricultural tariffs to compensate for the loss of Quantitative Restrictions as a policy instrument (as a result of losing a dispute within the WTO). This led the Secretariat to take a more critical stance on the gap issue, based on the uncertainty this created for economic calculation:

> …the average bound rate considerably exceeds the average applied rate, thus imparting a degree of *uncertainty* to the tariff and providing scope for the authorities to raise applied MFN [most favored nation] rates; indeed, tariffs were raised on some items following the recent removal of quantitative restrictions (WTO 2002a: 25, italics mine).

> This difference *lends uncertainty to economic agents* in India as it provides the Government with considerable scope to raise applied MFN tariffs within these bindings (WTO 2002a: 28, italics mine).

This line of critique was continued in 2007 Secretariat Report:

> As the overall applied MFN tariff declines, the gap between the bound and applied rates continues to grow… The difference between the high bound rates and considerably lower applied rates creates *uncertainty* for importers by giving scope to raise tariffs within the bound rates (WTO 2007a: 33).

In the 2002 meeting, criticism of the bound-applied gap and the uncertainty/ unpredictability this created for private economic agents was more widespread than in 1998 (although the EU representative did not mention it this time). It is first brought up by the discussant (Mary Whelan of Ireland):

> The average bound tariff (50.6% in 2005) was considerably higher than the current MFN average tariff, which lent uncertainty to economic agents in India. She [Whelan] asked whether there were proposals to address this uncertainty (WTO 2002c: 10).

The representative for Switzerland stated:

> The rather large proportion of unbound tariff lines as well as the gap between bound and applied rates provided scope for uncertainty, and diminished the predictability needed by economic operators (WTO 2002c: 13).

The representatives for Canada, Japan, and Norway made similar observations (12, 13- 14, & 21). The representative of the United States expanded on the argument against the gap by suggesting that locking in lower bound rates would be a way to insulate India's trade policy from domestic politics:

> It was worth noting that while respecting bound rates was enough within the WTO legal framework, tariff bindings not only benefited trading partners, and ensured security and predictability of the trading system, but they also protected governments from pressure by domestic industry and interest groups (WTO 2002c: 32).

In the 2007 meeting, the gap/ uncertainty critique is repeated by the discussant and the representatives of Switzerland, the EC, and Canada. This time they were joined by the representatives of Turkey and Sri Lanka. The latter stated

> Predictability for traders would be largely improved if more tariffs were bound at lower rates, thus reducing this gap (WTO 2007c: 18).

The India delegations at the 2002 and 2007 meetings both directly addressed the gap critique in their response statements, made towards the ends of each meeting.

> India saw the issue of the gap between applied and bound rates very positively. If the gap was high it was because India was able to make do with much lower applied tariff rates. At the same time, when required, the *flexibility* provided by the bound rates had been used, particularly on agricultural products, after the removal of QRs [quantitative restrictions]. The criteria used in determining tariff rates sought a balance between many factors, including the need for a phased reduction in duty as part of fiscal reform, the level of protection needed by the domestic industry, and the needs of the user industry or the consumers. A reduction in bound rates was a matter for the on-going negotiations on market access, where India would need to keep in view its various domestic imperatives, including developmental, fiscal, and other needs, as well as the extent to which its trading partners committed themselves to reducing export subsidies and domestic support (WTO 2002c: 29, italics mine).

Here, the Indian representatives dismiss the complaints about the gap by asserting its need to consider factors other than providing an easily predictable market for traders and investors. In this argument, the need for flexibility trumps the need for predictability. The policy space provided by the bound-applied tariff gap enabled the Indian government to deal quickly with unexpected events like the loss of the use of quantitative import restrictions in a previous WTO dispute settlement. Further, the representative made clear that lowering India's bound rates in subsequent agreements was a bargaining chip for which it expected equivalent concessions from its trading partners. The Indian representative at the 2007 meeting repeated its defense of the gap, although more succinctly:

> The progress in tariff reform, logically, had increased the gap between bound and applied rates. This should be viewed as a positive development. The benefit of low

> tariffs could far outweigh the fears of a possible hike in tariffs up to the bound levels (WTO 2007c: 20).

The Weak Argument in the Meetings: Limitations of Liberalization

Liberalization was not always a conceived as an easy and straightforward means to development, growth, and poverty reduction. Some speakers supported India's cautious pace, acknowledged that liberal reforms were not always popular, and even held India's approach to liberalization as a model.

A handful of developing country representatives noted that implementing liberal reforms were not easy and often came with socioeconomic dislocation:

> He was appreciative of India's successful economic development recently with respect to its policies with minimum social costs (WTO 1998: 19, representative of Cuba).
>
> Brazil understood the difficulties for a large developing country of a complex political, economic and cultural nature in going through a liberalization programme (18).
>
> Honduras was aware of the high cost of these policies (WTO 2002c: 23).
>
> Barbados appreciated that India had to manage its liberalization process carefully so as to minimize any economic or social dislocation, and acknowledged India's economic and social efforts towards the improvement of living standards (26).
>
> Subsidy and price policies… would need to be rationalized, so that they could be reduced without the unintended adverse effect on parallel social policy directed at the poor (WTO 2007c: 10, representative of Brunei/ ASEAN).
>
> India needed to keep the right balance between its domestic development needs and international commitments (19, representative of Zimbabwe).

One or two comments even suggested that the rest of the world could learn from India's particular model of liberalization:

> Noting the Secretariat Report's suggestion that a re-examination of certain aspects of India's trade and investment regime might strengthen economic growth, Brazil was strikingly aware of the need to reconcile sound economic policy and social objectives,

> and believed that there were many lessons to be derived from India's recent economic performance (WTO 2002c: 17, representative of Brazil).
>
> The representative of Mexico noted… that when structural reforms were applied properly, countries could grow quickly (WTO 2007c: 13).

The representatives of the EU in 1998 and 2002, while strongly arguing the necessity of liberalization for development, at least acknowledged that the Indian electorate might not see it this way:

> The challenge for India was to demonstrate to a sometimes sceptical public that liberalization benefited growth, employment and overall development (WTO 1998c: 12).
>
> Everyone was aware of India's domestic situation with a sometimes hostile public opinion that found the WTO an easy scapegoat for home-made economic problems (WTO 2007c: 15).

The 2007 representative of the EU still argued for liberalization as a means to development, but was slightly more nuanced and diplomatic:

> During the ongoing reform process, one of the main challenges for India was the balancing of social and economic development… She sought India's views on how trade policy could best contribute to sustainable development, and how some of the social and environmental effects of trade liberalization could best be addressed (WTO 2007c: 12).

Although she acknowledged some distinction between social and economic development (and environmental concerns), she remained committed to the idea that the benefits of trade liberalization could only help overall development:

> Although more needed to be done to tackle the still serious level of poverty, the rising inter-state disparities, and the income inequalities, India was conscious of the need to further pursue development through trade. This, however, would have to be underpinned by credible economic and structural reforms, including upgrading India's infrastructure. WTO Membership would play a helpful role, as abiding by WTO obligations, both present and future ones under the DDA, would help lock in domestic reforms (*ibid*).

This recalls the argument examined in the section above entitled Autonomy, where some speakers (including the Secretariat and the EU representative) argued for India to bound its tariffs at the lower rates at which they were currently being applied, to prevent future Indian governments from raising them. By *lock in*, the representative is proposing that liberalization can be made permanent by enshrining in an international agreement beyond the reach of the 'sceptical' and 'hostile' Indian public. The 2007 representative of Japan was also more sensitive to India's pace of reform:

> In a democratic country where more than half of the population was in farming, a rapid change would not be realistic (14).

And even the representative of the United States acknowledged that agricultural liberalization, at least, presented some potential socioeconomic dislocation:

> Reforming [the agricultural] sector was very challenging as it sustained the livelihoods of two thirds of India's vast population (14).

Turning the Tables: India and the Developing World

Turn-about Critique

The Indian government and delegation never failed to use the Government Reports and the meeting as a platform to critique its trading partners. One of the most overt topics of critique was excessive farm subsidies in the European Union and the United States, which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 7. Other targets of critique included the slow pace of dismantling quantitative restrictions in textiles (in 1998 and 2002); the lack of attention to the movement of workers in services liberalization; the perceived use of safety/ health standards by India's trading partners as non-tariff barriers; a perceived bias against developing-country exports in developed-country tariff structures; and the abuse of anti-dumping and other safeguard measures by India's trading partners.

A major component of the Uruguay Round was the Agreement on Clothing and Textiles (ACT), which outlined the gradual dismantlement of the older Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA), by which developed countries had protected their textile and clothing industries from developing economy competition via a system of import quotas. This was done over ten years and was still in progress during the 2002 and 2005 TRPs. In both of these, the Indian government complained that developed countries were dragging their feet and replacing quotas with other trade barriers.

> Amongst the import policy issues, quantitative restrictions, especially in the textiles area, are one of the most important of the non-tariff barriers affecting India's trade. While the MFA is being phased out, there is a certain "back loading" insofar as items of interest to India are concerned. Another problem in the area of textiles arose with the introduction of new "country of origin rules" by some of our major trading partners, limiting the flexibility of Indian exporters in finishing garment/textile items from other countries for export to the trading partners, which have invoked such rules. (WTO 1998b: 8)

"Country of origin" rules were seen in the Indian Government Reports as backdoor trade barrier to replace the quotas that were being phased out. By the 2002 Government Report, two additional non-tariff barriers were suspected of fulfilling the same purpose. The first was simply anti-dumping measures:

> Repeated anti-dumping investigations on the textile products like cotton fabrics and cotton bedlinen, in which India enjoys a measure of comparative advantage, had a debilitating effect on the Indian textile industry and exports. The export of textile products has also been affected because of ban on use of Azo dyes (WTO 2002b: 15).

A second trend that the Government Report saw as recreating the MFA barriers in another form was the proliferation of Regional Trade Agreements:

> Another area of concern regarding market access for textile trade is an increasing tendency to enter into bilateral pacts for conferring selective liberalization of quotas. The tariff preferences have also been extended bilaterally, which are otherwise meant

> to be provided to all developing countries on a non-reciprocal basis. There is also a growing regionalization of textile trade on account of formation of Free Trade Areas and Preferential Trading Arrangements. It is estimated that 59% of world trade in textiles is presently taking place under RTAs. Such localization of world textile trade is adversely affecting India's textile trade (WTO 2002b: 16).

By 2007, the MFA and its quota system had been completely dismantled, but the Government Report still complained that Indian clothing and textiles were still the target of a disproportionate number of anti-dumping measures (WTO 2007b: 33) and further that the attention given to simply abolishing the MFA had distracted from carrying out other liberalization measures in the clothing and textiles sector:

> In the Uruguay Round, the efforts of the developing countries were centered on the more visible and immediate effects of quota restrictions and, therefore, on getting the sector reintegrated into the same rules and disciplines of the multilateral system as for any other sector of industrial goods. Consequently, textiles and clothing tariffs escaped being subjected to any significant reductions and therefore remain much higher than other industrial products (WTO 2007b: 33).

All three government reports pushed for the liberalization of labor migration from developing to developed countries as part of the liberalization of services under the WTO:

> While developed countries have surplus capital to invest, most of the developing countries have surplus of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers. We have a large pool of well-qualified professionals capable of providing services abroad. As developed countries have a comparative advantage in exporting capital intensive services, similarly developing countries have a comparative advantage in exporting labour intensive services involving movement of persons. While GATS recognizes "movement of natural persons" as one of the modes for supply of services, the commitments undertaken by the developed countries have very little to offer to the developing countries in terms of opening their markets or facilitating the administrative arrangements or providing national treatment in the area of movement of natural persons (WTO 1998b: 11).

This text was repeated almost word-for-word in 2002 Government Report (WTO 2002b: 19). The 2007 Government Report was more elaborate about the specific outcomes that the Indian government sought in the service negotiations of the Doha Round:

> India wants the removal of the Economic Needs Test (ENT), a clear prescription of the duration of stay, provisions of extension, etc. Such commitments will lead to gains for both developed and developing countries (WTO 2007b: 21).

The Report complained that while others modes of services trade had been substantially liberalized under the WTO, services related to the movement of natural persons, or 'Mode 4' services in the language of the negotiations, had been left untouched:

> It needs to be noted that an estimate carried out by the WTO with regard to the share of the four modes of supply in the global trade in services shows that while Mode 4 contributes only 1% of all services trade, the shares of Mode 1, Mode 2 and Mode 3 are 28%, 14%, and 57% respectively (WTO 2007b: 21).

Another major complaint made in the Government Report was that India's trading partners, particularly developed countries, were abusing food safety standards as a means to impose non-tariff barriers of Indian products:

> Numerous restrictions on sanitary and phytosanitary grounds on India's agricultural products are often not supported by adequate scientific justification (WTO 1998b: 8).
>
> The WTO Agreements recognize the diversity of standards across countries, but the issue of actual needs also needs to be factored in. Many times these standards and measures are such that they impose inappropriate or unwarranted economic and social costs on the exporting countries – more so if the exporting countries are the developing and the least developed countries- without actually conferring a commensurate gain to the importing countries. Such measures thus impede trade and deny a trade opportunity to developing countries like India. For instance India had to wait, without much scientific reason, for almost two decades to secure access for its mangoes to two of the leading developed countries (WTO 2007b: 33).

The development of standards was additionally criticized as a process dominated by developed countries which specifically disadvantaged developing countries

> India is concerned that although the Ministry of Health and other Ministries, BIS [Bureau of Indian Statistics] and expert bodies involved in the field of sanitary standards participate in the policy making committees of international bodies such as the ISO, the Codex Alimentarius etc. the developing countries are grossly outnumbered by the developed countries in these deliberations, at times resulting in international standards development not conducive to their implementation by the developing countries.

> Simultaneous and rapid development of standards has made it even more difficult for developing countries to suitably respond to the proposals. (WTO 2002b: 17).

Finally, it was claimed that India had been subject to an unfair proportion of anti-dumping cases by its trading partners:

> India has a current share of only around 1% of global merchandise exports. In 1995, the share was much less. However, it has been subjected to a disproportionate number of trade defense actions. For instance during the period 1 January 1995 to 30 June 2006, Indian products have been subjected to 124 out of the 2938 anti-dumping actions initiated globally, which amounts to more than 4% of the total. These 124 initiations resulted in measures being taken in 69 cases (55.6%) (WTO 2007b: 32).

Mutual Interest and Solidarity among Developing Countries

Being classified as a developing country for WTO purposes was not just a convenient descriptive label. The WTO agreements specifically differentiated between developing and developed economies when operationalizing certain rules. For example, the provision for Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) specifically entitled developing countries more flexibility in implementing WTO regulations. Preserving, expanding, and favorably interpreting these official developing economy rights gave representatives from developing countries a strong incentive to cooperate and support one another in WTO negotiations. Beyond rules concerning their official designation, developing countries often had similar economic concerns that tended to put them on the same side on issues within the WTO, for instance those concerning access to agricultural and textile markets in developed economies.

The representatives of India brought up several issues of particular interest for developing countries in the meeting (generally echoing those presented in the Government Report), including agricultural subsidies, food and livelihood security, ‘mode 4’ service trade (involving Indians working abroad), textile quotas, the use of sanitary and safety standards as 'non-tariff' barriers, intellectual property issues, and provisions for Special and Differential Treatment of developing economies within the WTO.

Several developing country representatives expressed support for India's positions in general and in some cases for specific areas. Table 6.3 below summarizes these areas in terms of which representatives expressed support and when.

Table 6.3: Mention of Developing Country Issues by Year, by Representative

	1998	2002	2007
Special and Differential Treatment	Dominican Republic, Nigeria	Mauritania, Morocco	
Labor Standards	Indonesia/ ASEAN, Egypt, Colombia, Nigeria, Cuba, Dominican Republic		
Market Access		Philippines, Sri Lanka, Cuba	Uruguay
(Textiles)		Sri Lanka	
(Agricultural)		Sri Lanka	Uruguay
Other Issues		Sri Lanka (standards), Jamaica (tariffs as revenue generator)	

Making the Case for Special Treatment

The representatives of India made the case for developing countries needing more time and flexibility to implement reform than developed countries.

> Despite many constraints, India had undertaken to implement all its WTO commitments faithfully. Likewise, India expected its concerns to be addressed meaningfully. Some of these had been indicated in the Government Report, i.e., satisfactory resolution of implementation-related issues and of the Special and Differential Treatment issues. The Doha Declaration had given high priority to the resolution of these issues; developing countries had also submitted proposals on several of them. India looked forward to

> their meaningful resolution strictly in accordance with the deadlines spelt out in the Doha Ministerial Declaration (WTO 2002c: 7).
>
> Sustained economic reforms required enormous investment of both capital and of organizational and institutional ability to meet the challenges. Developing countries had a very deep deficit in this area, resulting in uneven reforms, as well as the stops and starts in economic reforms… Each country had to find its way through to prosperity; capacity building and hand-holding were therefore essential (WTO 2007c: 6).

Provisions along these lines were already written into the WTO agreement on Special and Differential Treatment (SDT), but the representatives of India argued that these were not well-defined enough to be effective:

> There was particular concern about the provisions relating to special and differential treatment for developing countries, many of which needed to be more sharply defined and guidelines issued for their implementation (WTO 1998c: 3).
>
> Operationalizing special and differential treatment provisions for developing countries would ameliorate, to a certain extent, the difficulties of exporting to developed countries. (WTO 2002c: 30).

The only other representative to mention STD was the one for New Zealand in 2002:

> New Zealand looked forward to working constructively with India in areas such as special and differential treatment, and outstanding implementation issues to take into account developing countries' interests (WTO 2002c: 18).

A few, but only a few, developing country representatives made comments calling for special accomodations to made for developing countries, probably an indirect reference to SDT:

> The representative of the <u>Dominican Republic</u> echoed comments by the Indian delegation regarding the major effort required of developing countries in adapting their policy and legislation to WTO disciplines (WTO 1998c: 19).
>
> Therefore, Nigeria urged trading partners to be sensitive to these transition problems and to give developing countries more time for reforms to be undertaken (WTO 1998c 18- 19).
>
> Many delegations shared India's stand… that appropriate flexibility be given for individual developing country Members to liberalize in line with their development, and national policy objectives (WTO 2002c: 20, representative of Mauritania).

> The representative of <u>Morocco</u> noted that in the context of multilateral negotiations his country shared common preoccupations with India on reform of special and differential treatment, sustainable solutions to implementation, and technical assistance and capacity-building for developing countries (WTO 2002c: 26).

Defeating Labor Standards

One of the clearest examples of consensus among developing country representatives in the TPRs relates to the rejection of labor standards in the WTO. In the 1998 TPR Meeting only there was a prominent argument concerning labor standards and the appropriateness of the WTO as a venue to discuss this issue. Between the 1996 Singapore Ministerial and the 1999 Seattle Ministerial, there was a movement within the WTO led by the United States under the Clinton administration, to introduce labor standards into WTO rules. This was, in fact, a primary reason for the breakdown of negotiations at Seattle in 1999. The 1998 TPR, however, took place when this movement was in full swing and the representative of the United States at this meeting took the opportunity to strongly push this agenda:

> She highlighted the importance of labour and India's efforts to raise the standard of living for its people. Implementation and enforcement of internationally recognized core labour standards was an important aspect of the human face of trade, to which Ministers at Singapore recently renewed their commitments. Although India had made strides in recent years in addressing labour issues, concerns remained with the lack of implementation and/or enforcement of core labour standards, notably with regard to child labour, forced labour and the so-called informal sector, which by some accounts, was responsible for as much as 98% of the workforce in trade, commerce and the agricultural sectors. It was hoped that India would take a lead on the work being done at the ILO on a declaration on core labour standards and that the ILO and WTO Secretariats could coordinate on providing technical assistance. It was hoped that India would fulfill its commitments on core labour standards and inform WTO members of any steps taken in this direction (WTO 1998c: 14).

The U.S. representative returned to this argument a couple of times during the meeting (15, 28), and the representative of Norway took a similar position:

> He noted India's increasing concern for core labour standards… He underlined the importance of the on-going work in the ILO on core labour standards; a declaration was

> under preparation and he urged India to take a positive and constructive position on this issue in accordance with the stipulations for WTO and ILO cooperation laid down in paragraph 4 of the text of the Ministerial Conference in Singapore in December 1996 (WTO 1998c: 16).

These two speakers were, however, alone in pushing for labor standards in the WTO. The representative of India dismissed this idea in no uncertain terms, arguing that such standards were the purview of the International Labour Organization (ILO), not the WTO.

> Responding to questions related to core labour standards, the representative of India noted that as agreed at the Ministerial Conference in Singapore the ILO was the competent body to deal with these issues. Therefore, it was not appropriate to deal with issues related to core labour standards in the WTO fora (WTO 1998c: 26).

The representatives of a number of other developing countries supported the position of the Indian delegation here (foreshadowing events in Seattle a year later):

> It was ASEAN's view that the issue of India's labour standards was beyond the scope of the WTO; the issue was appropriately dealt with at the ILO (WTO 1998c: 17, representative of Indonesia).
>
> He stated that raising issues beyond the competence and scope of the WTO, such as labour standards, would not serve the objectives of the Trade Policy Review Mechanism and these issues should be raised in other competent fora (WTO 1998c: 17, representative of Egypt).
>
> Although some delegations had raised the issue of core labour standards, referring to it as a trade-related phenomenon, the issue belonged within the ILO forum and not the WTO, as agreed at the Singapore Ministerial meeting. He therefore believed that the issue by definition was excluded from any consideration in the present forum (WTO 1998c: 18, representative of Colombia).
>
> He noted that comments relating to core labour standards were not for the consideration of the WTO and should be referred to the relevant body (WTO 1998c: 19, representative of Nigeria).
>
> He said that labour matters should not be treated in the TPR exercise because, as already pointed out, this was the remit of the ILO (WTO 1998c: 19, representative of Cuba).
>
> On the matter of labour standards, he pointed out that the Ministerial meeting in Singapore had made clear that these were not the remit of the WTO (WTO 1998c: 19, representative of Dominican Republic).

The issue of bringing labor standards into the WTO was not brought up in the 2002 or 2007 Meeting Minutes, with the exception of a brief reference to "the uniform application of employment standards" as part of a list necessary job market reforms (WTO 2007: 12).

Market Access

Indian representatives sometimes turned the tables on the critique of the slow pace of reform in India by calling for developed countries to liberalize their markets first.

> Looking at the forward agenda for reform, he urged industrialized trading partners to support India's liberalization programme by ensuring open markets for Indian products and that all forms of disguised protection were avoided (WTO 1998c: 4).
>
> For India to reach its goal… India's efforts would need to be complemented by action from its WTO trading partners to meet its legitimate concerns and aspirations. In this regard, India looked forward to increased market access in the developed countries, a bridging of the gap between preferential and non-preferential tariffs, harmonization of rules of origin, and reduction of non-tariff barriers (WTO 2002c: 7- 8).

In this argument, the lowering of trade barriers in developed economies was not merely a fair bargain for developing economies lowering their trade barriers; rather, the former was portrayed as something which would enable the latter.

The 2002 Meeting was in particular framed by this 'developed countries first' trope in that it was picked up by both of the non-member speakers. Chairperson Mohammed referenced it in both her opening remarks and closing summary:

> There was also an expectation, however, that India's trading partners in the WTO would take steps to remove impediments to its exports (WTO 2002c: 3).
>
> Many Members added that these efforts would be greatly enhanced by steps on the part of India's trading partners to reduce, if not remove, their impediments to India's exports, especially in the context of new negotiations in line with the Doha Development Agenda (DDA). India has clearly stated its support for the WTO and the DDA but considers that if further progress is to be made, the onus remains on the

> developed countries to keep the promises made in Doha. This view was endorsed by many other Members, who look to India for leadership in these negotiations (WTO 2002c: 36)

Discussant Whelan similarly argued for greater market access for Indian products in terms of the Doha Development Round, bringing in dollar estimates to support it (WTO 2002c: 11, see above).

A handful of developing country representatives in 2002 made specific reference India's market access concerns vis-à-vis developed economies:

> In order for India to justify further reform to its stakeholders, the international community needed to ensure market access rather than selective preferences or, even worse, non-MFN treatment in important markets for both goods and services of interest to India (WTO 2002c: 19, representative of the Philippines).
>
> Sri Lanka believed that international trade was vital for development, and developed country Members of the WTO should address India's market access concerns (WTO 2002c: 24).
>
> Cuba hoped that in the framework of the DDA, India's efforts would be compensated by the elimination of trade restrictions and other barriers to trade, which restricted market access for products and services originating from India (WTO 2002c: 25).

The above quotes did not allude to specific types of markets, but the Indian representatives' comments made it clear that India considered its access to foreign markets blocked by farm subsidies 2002c: 7), textile quotas (WTO 2002c: 7, 32), and health and safety standards (WTO 1998c: 4, 2002c: 7, 2007c: 3- 5, 22). The 2002 representative of Sri Lanka was especially supportive of these arguments and specifically listed many of them:

> In the Government Report, India had highlighted impediments to growth of its international trade, including non-tariff barriers, such as restrictive import policy regimes, standards, testing, labelling and certification requirements, export subsidies, and barriers on services. Quantitative restrictions especially in textiles were identified as one of the most important non-tariff barriers to trade. Sri Lanka shared India's concerns. The Report also highlighted issues relating to agriculture, technical barriers to trade, intellectual property rights, and services negotiations. Sri Lanka believed that these would be addressed in the ongoing negotiations. The Report stated that although agriculture's contribution to employment and GDP were large, India's share of world

> exports remained less than 2%. The situation in countries like Sri Lanka, was similar. Therefore, the ongoing negotiations should provide flexibility to developing countries to address food security concerns, while market access for their agricultural products became extremely important (WTO 2002c: 24).

Although the representative does not state that these problems are specific to India's trade with developed countries, the types of barriers described – textile quotas, agricultural issues, standards, intellectual property rights – strongly suggest this.

Although not representing a developing country the New Zealand representatives tended to express explicit support for lower farm subsidies (in accordance with the views of the Cairns Group).

> He noted India's concern at the high levels of agricultural subsidies in many developed countries and the negative effect on countries. Such subsidies artificially lowered the world price of agricultural products - exactly those products that developing and least-developed countries had a comparative advantage in producing. He hoped that others would take note of this concern and refine their policies accordingly (WTO 1998c: 10).
>
> The representative of New Zealand said his country shared India's recognition of the need for fundamental reform of the global agricultural trading system. This required substantial improvements in market access, the elimination of export subsidies, and substantial reductions in domestic support (WTO 2002c: 17).

Health and Safety Standards

The representatives of India used the TPR meetings to complain of "unjustified non-tariff barriers created by local health and environmental concerns, but which did not have transboundary effects" (WTO 1998c: 4). They also emphasized that this was not a problem of concern to just India, but also to developing countries in general:

> Non-tariff barriers to imports from developing countries were ubiquitous… The frequent and abusive use of non-tariff barriers, more than serving the ostensible purposes of consumer safety, environment protection, and ethical business practices, had increasingly become a hindrance to global trade. Developed countries' non-tariff barriers were constantly changing and full compliance was nearly impossible as developing countries lacked the financial resources to comply with the standards prescribed. Moreover, standards were revised, mostly upwards, at regular intervals and

> not necessarily on the basis of objective scientific criteria or reasonable risk assessment, making it very difficult for developing countries to adapt to these ever-changing requirements (WTO 2007c: 5- 6).
>
> India appreciated that its products should meet international standards, and had made considerable progress by harmonizing Indian standards with international standards. However, India felt outnumbered in the deliberations of various international bodies, such as the International Standards Organization (ISO) and the Codex Alimentarius, which resulted in the adoption of standards that developing countries could not implement. India hoped, therefore, that efforts made by the DG and the WTO would enhance participation by developing countries in the work of the international standard-setting bodies (WTO 2002c: 7)

The representative of Sri Lanka in 2002 was the only developing country representative to explicitly support the Indian representatives on this issue, adding "labelling and certification requirements" to a list of non-tariff barriers to India's trade (WTO 2002c: 24).

Speaking for the Developing World

It did not escape the Indian representatives in the Meetings that many Indian economic concerns were common to the developing world in general. They frequently phrased their arguments as being for *developing country* concerns.

> Even though India was committed to meeting its obligations under the WTO, developing countries such as India faced difficulties in implementing these commitments, especially in new disciplines such as intellectual property rights and services (WTO 1998c: 3, representative of India).
>
> India's problems concerning market access for textile products were well known, and needed no repetition. India stressed that this was an important sector for developing countries, and that further opening up would help them to increase their share in world trade. India looked forward to improved market access for its agricultural products in the on-going negotiations under the Agreement on Agriculture through the reduction of high tariffs and subsidies prevalent in the developed countries (WTO 2002c: 7, representative of India).
>
> For developing countries, the multilateral forum was the best insurance against arbitrariness in trade practices. Moreover, this was the only way to realize the ultimate goal of fair trade. India was thus strongly committed to ensuring a successful conclusion

> of the Doha Round, a Development Round, where greater benefits had to flow to developing countries not developed countries (WTO 2007c: 25).

This positioning gave the representatives' arguments the rhetorical weight of claiming to speak for *most* of the members of the WTO, not just one. This weight was enhanced with the start of the Doha 'Development' Round of talks, during which the last two TPRs took place.

Reinforcing this position as spokescountry for the developing world, the Indian representatives frequently set up developed countries in a somewhat adversarial position vis-à-vis developing countries. This partially accounts by the more frequent usage of the term 'developed countries' by Indian representatives than other speakers in the meeting. The developing versus developed world trope was most strongly stated in the opening remarks of India representative Pillai in the 2007 Meeting. He built up the case for developing disadvantage on one level by simply describing the economic imbalance between the two worlds was described in stark terms:

> Even after more than two decades of rapid trade growth, the pattern of trade remained highly skewed in favour of the developed world. High-income countries, representing 15% of the world's population, accounted for two thirds of world's exports. The share of world exports of sub-Saharan Africa, with 689 million people, was less than one half of that of Belgium, with 10 million people. The current Doha Development Round was a historic opportunity to partially correct this imbalance (WTO 2007c: 6).

This statement, in of itself, only constructs the low participation of developing countries in world trade as a problem to solve. Pillai did not end his analysis here, he also made the case that bias and hypocrisy on the part of negotiators from developed countries were actively working against solving the problem:

> Developed countries had a tendency to talk about market access in developing countries for goods and services of export interest to them. However, market access to developed countries was sometimes thwarted by a phalanx of protectionist measures, some of which were legal, and some not. The Human Development Report 2005 stated that "developed country governments seldom waste an opportunity to emphasize the virtues of open markets, level playing fields and free trade, especially in their

> prescriptions for poor countries. Yet the same governments maintain a formidable array of protectionist barriers against developing countries." On average, low-income countries faced tariffs three to four times higher than the barriers applied in trade between high-income countries. Developing countries accounted for less than one third of developed country imports, but for two thirds of tariff revenues collected (5- 6).

Pillai here makes the argument for economic fairness entirely within the framework of free trade ideology, accusing developed countries of hypocrisy within the neoliberal ideology that their representatives had often promoted internationally. He then blamed the breakdown of breakdown of the negotiations on the unwillingness of developing countries to compromise (while also making the case that the improvement of developing economies would ultimately benefit developed countries in the future):

> India was extremely concerned at the slow pace of negotiations. While the suspended talks had resumed, the political will of developed countries was still not evident. Unless the development dimension of the Doha Round was met and the developing countries prospered, global trade would always be at risk. The rapid economic growth of developing countries was a must for a truly global trade order to flourish. India was committed to meeting its obligations under the mandate of the July Framework and the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration. Developed countries needed to recognize that the destinies of developed and developing countries were intertwined (6).

Throughout his remarks, Pillai consistently argues in terms of the interests of developing countries in general and not merely the interests of India.

Leadership and Responsibility

Many speakers in the Meetings remarked on India's key role in the on-going WTO negotiations and especially on its advocacy of developing country interests. This lends some credibility to the implicit claims of the Indian representatives to speak for the developing world. Some of these comments specifically referred to India as a 'leader' among developing countries, while others merely expressed an appreciation of mutual interests within the context of WTO negotiations. One variant of this group of statements asserted that India's leadership came with weighty responsibilities; this sentiment was mainly expressed by non-member speakers and representatives from developed economies.

A few developing country representatives specifically used the term 'leadership' to describe India's position (italics mine):

> He also recognized the important role played by India in the multilateral trading system and its *leadership* in questions of development, raised in the WTO and elsewhere (WTO 1998c: 19, representative of Cuba).
>
> Developing countries greatly valued India's *leadership* in the WTO and the UN, as it was clearly a major player in both organizations. The representative recalled India's prominent role at the Doha Ministerial Conference in November 2001, which testified to India's commitment to the multilateral trading system… Botswana looked forward to India's continued *leadership* in negotiations under the DDA (WTO 2002c: 25- 26, representative of Botswana).
>
> The representative of Nigeria acknowledged India's *leadership* role in the multilateral trading system, particularly its strong commitment and support for an early conclusion of the DDA negotiations (WTO 2007c: 19)

Other developing country representatives also made strong statements asserting India's key role in advocating developing world interests:

> The representative of Brazil reiterated his country's appreciation for India's role in the WTO. India had been extremely influential in denouncing the inequities faced by developing countries in the international economic arena, as well as in promoting a more equitable multilateral trading system (WTO 1998c: 17).
>
> The representative of Uruguay noted India's active role in the WTO and as a defender of developing countries to achieve a more equitable multilateral trading system (WTO 2002c: 14).
>
> As a key player in the multilateral trading system and a leading member of the G20 and G33, India played an important and constructive role in pursuing development as the core issue of the Doha Round negotiations (WTO 2007c: 18, representative of China).
>
> The representative acknowledged India's role in the GATT and the WTO in helping developing countries to reap the benefits of the multilateral trading system (WTO 2002c: 16, representative of Colombia).

> As a strong supporter of the multilateral trading system and the rights of developing countries, India was an example to many developing countries (WTO 2002c: 25, representative of Cuba).
>
> The representative of Uruguay highlighted India's active role in the G20, whose goal was to achieve fundamental reform to bring agriculture to the same level as other sectors in global trade, so as to achieve a fairer multilateral trading system (WTO 2007c: 18).
>
> He emphasized the important role played by India in the institutional consolidation of the multilateral trading system and said that its active participation in the various WTO bodies and its ongoing contribution made it one of the principle players of this system (WTO 1998c: 18, representative of Colombia).

Some developing country representatives expressed a more subdued version of this sentiment, acknowledging India as speaking for developing country concerns, in general or in reference to specific issues.

> India's policies had been accompanied by its active participation in the WTO, in particular the functioning of the multilateral trading system, and support developing countries' interests. Honduras encouraged India to continue to support the promotion of preferential access for developing country exports thus increasing their participation in world trade (WTO 2002c: 23, representative of Honduras).
>
> The representative of Morocco noted that in the context of multilateral negotiations his country shared common preoccupations with India on reform of special and differential treatment, sustainable solutions to implementation, and technical assistance and capacity-building for developing countries (WTO 2002c: 26).
>
> He expressed support for India's continued reforms, as well as an interest in ensuring that the concerns of developing countries be duly taken into consideration in order to further strengthen the multilateral trading system (WTO 1998c: 19, representative of the Dominican Republic).
>
> The representative of Egypt noted that the Trade Policy Review of India acquired special importance, because of India's weight in world trade as a developing country, and its active and effective participation in the multilateral trading system (WTO 1998c: 17).
>
> The representative of Ecuador stated that the two countries shared a global vision for the multilateral trading system (WTO 2007c: 19).

A few comments, all by representatives of African countries, directly thanked India for assistance and support provided by India to specific groups of developing countries:

> Mauritius appreciated India's support for the Work Programme on Small Economies for the fuller integration of small, vulnerable economies into the multilateral trading system, and for the concerns expressed by single commodity producers and small island developing states in agriculture (WTO 1998c: 20).
>
> He also commended India for providing trade-related technical assistance and capacity building for African countries (WTO 2007c: 19, representative of Nigeria)
>
> Mali appreciated India's efforts in providing duty-free and quota-free access of cotton from LDCs, in keeping with the Hong Kong Declarations, and in providing technical assistance for African countries (WTO 2007c: 19).

A few comments used 'leadership' in terms of economic performance, especially in terms of its high-tech service sector:

> India was one of the leaders among developing countries in telecommunications and information technology (WTO 2002c: 25, representative of Botswana).
>
> The representative of Jamaica recalled that over the last few years, India had been ranked among the world's 25 emerging markets, pointing to the country's potential to become one of the largest and leading economies in the world (WTO 2002c: 21).

These simply noted an economic leadership status, but the following quote from the United States tacitly implies the dependence of this status on liberalization:

> All these [reform] efforts had contributed to India's rise to the fourth largest economy in the world in purchasing power parity terms, and its emergence as a leading competitor in information technology (WTO 2007c: 14, representative of the United States).

Below, we will examine a subtle undercurrent in a few developed member statements suggesting a challenge to the trope that India's economic rise was simply a result of the application of a standard set of liberal reforms.

The leadership trope was also used in a few cases in terms of future action. The representatives of the United States in both 1998 and 2007 called on India to set an example for the rest of the world through economic liberalization:

> India had clearly benefited from the international trading environment and all the Members of the WTO looked to India to play a leading role in further liberalization of trade and investment (WTO 1998c: 15).
>
> India would be one of the biggest beneficiaries of an ambitious and successful outcome of the DDA negotiations, thus it was one of the key stakeholders in the work to ensure an open and rules-based multilateral trading system. The TPR dialogue had been particularly important given India's new role as a major player in the trading system (WTO 2007c: 28).

The representative of South Korea made a similar remark in 2007:

> As trade liberalization had been highly beneficial to the Indian economy, he urged India to play a leadership role in the DDA negotiations (WTO 2007c: 15).

The 2007 representative of the EU in 2007, after making similar claims about the benefits of WTO membership to India (WTO 2007c: 12- 13), was paraphrased as stating:

> As a leading representative of the developing world, India's membership of the G4 in the DDA carried significant weight and expectations (13).

The G4 was not a faction in the WTO but rather a temporary negotiating body consisting only of the two leading members of the Quad (the EU and US) and the two leading G20 developing countries – India and Brazil. The EU representative quoted above clearly saw India's admittance to this exclusive club as entailing grave responsibilities towards the project of global trade liberalization.

It was discussant Guth in the 2007 Meeting who made the clearest statement asserting that India had major responsibilities and specifying what these were:

> India's position as a world player came with responsibilities. For example, some Members had urged India to provide improved access to its markets for LDCs. Social challenges had also been mentioned. In addition, a country of the size of India would not only have an impact on global environmental development, but was also likely to be among the first major nations affected by global climate change. Thus India had to emphasize global environmental policy in its own interest and for the interest of all (WTO 2007c: 26).

Although Guth (as seen in previous quotes) strongly urged more liberalization for India, it is notable that he deploys the responsibility trope not for India to be a liberalizing role model, but in terms of obligations to poorer economies (the LDCs or Least Developed Countries) and to the global environment. The 2007 EU representatives also called on India to make market access concessions for LDCs (WTO 2007c: 13), while the 2002 representative of Cuba noted that India had already done something like this under the Global System of Trade Preferences (WTO 2002c: 25). Guth later in the meeting "encouraged India to show a leadership role in SAFTA [South Asian Free Trade Area]" (WTO 2007c: 25) as a means to increase regional trade.

Chairperson Himanen in 2007 simply noted that: "Members encouraged it to continue to show leadership in bringing the Doha Round to a successful conclusion" (WTO 2007c: 30). At least two representatives of developed economies, Hong Kong (WTO 2002c: 16) and Japan (WTO 2007c: 14), remarked on India's leadership role without implying that this came with any specific obligations for future action.

Conclusion

The Trade Policy Reviews of India during the period 1998- 2007 reveal strikingly little deviation or dissent from the overall argument for liberalization. There were no arguments against reforms already undertaken or against the proposition that more liberalization should take place in the future. At best there were disagreements as to the pace and comprehensiveness of future reform. Whether explicitly stated or tacitly supported, the systematic logic of "liberalization leads to economic growth, economic growth leads to development" went unchallenged throughout. These observations tend to support Peet's (2003: 198) argument that the WTO is "restrictive discursive environment" where the logic of neoliberalism is accepted as common sense.

That being said, there was also room for maneuver within the overall discourse of neoliberalism. What I have labeled the 'weak argument' for liberalization in this chapter does not question the effectiveness of liberalization in general, but it does make room for more qualifications and exceptions than what I have called the 'strong argument.' The exception of agriculture from neoliberal logic will be the subject of the next chapter. In general, the Indian Government Reports made the case for the weak argument, while the Secretariat Reports tended to support the strong argument, and the Meeting Reports contained statements leaning in both directions.

The weak argument sees liberal reforms as promising, but also untested and risky. They should be implemented, but in a slow, incremental, and cautious fashion. In this argument there is also a case made that liberal reforms must be adapted to the context in which they take place, there can be no "one-size-fits-all" reform program (WTO 2007c: 6). In addition, it is argued that reforms cannot be undertaken in a top-down fashion, but must be submitted to democratic processes, which again justifies the incremental pace. In the strong argument we see unwavering confidence in the efficacy of liberal reforms. Problems with past reforms are blamed on them not going far enough. Reforms are not seen as risky, because there no doubt that they will work. Lack of reform is considered riskier because the old way of doing things is unsustainable and will inevitably break down. There is little room for made for context-dependency in this set of arguments. For instance, it is assumed that the same reforms that worked for services will work for manufacturing and agriculture. And the autonomy and flexibility argued for in the weak argument are in the strong argument seen as an unstable element, engendering 'unpredictabilty.'

The role of the Secretariat in this process is of considerable interest. In most other aspects of the WTO, the Secretariat is seen merely as an administrative infrastructure, a bureaucracy to organize meetings, process paperwork, and carry out other routine bureaucratic functions. But it is also assigned a role as a 'technical advisor' to member entities, and the preparation of Trade Policy Review reports is major aspect of this role. As noted earlier, the normative criteria for these reports is not to what extent the target country has fulfilled its WTO obligations, but rather to what extent the target country has liberalized its entire economy (regardless of whether a given reform was required by the WTO agreements or not). Whom is the Secretariat representing when it lays out the strong liberalization argument in its reports? It is not representing the varied positions of all WTO members on this subject, certainly not those of the Indian government, which made a strong case for the weak argument in these three TPRs. This observation supports the idea that the Secretariat is more than just a neutral appendage of the collective membership of the WTO. Rather it seems to be a semi-autonomous institution with its own worldview and agenda. This agenda includes counseling members to implement liberal reforms well beyond those required by standing WTO agreements.

There has been debate in both the policy transfer and neoliberalization literatures about whether and to what extent national economic policies around the world have become more homogenous (see chapter 3). Global governance institutions like the WTO are seen as key drivers of policy homogenization. However, the formal WTO agreements do include flexibility for implementation and notably apply differentially based on the developmental status of the members (i.e. developing countries generally had more time to implement certain provisions, were allowed more exceptions, and often had to meet less demanding benchmarks than those required of developed economies). The Indian government's insistence on context-dependency and autonomy in its reform program demonstrate that adjustments for neoliberalism are not the same everywhere. On the other hand, there is directionality to the reforms; there may be variation and flexibility, but in general most of them are moving toward a mode of using markets more government less as a social regulatory mechanism.

Is there room for genuine counter-hegemony within this restrictive discursive environment? Towards the end of the chapter, we examined some instances of dissent and solidarity among developing country representatives, often with India in an acknowledged position of leadership. The Indian representatives and other developing country delegates challenged developed members on farm subsidies, labor standards, textile quotas, special and differential treatment, food safety regulations, and other issues. Large and relatively industrialized developing countries like India and Brazil were especially in positions where they could use their bargaining power to wrest some concessions out of the Quad.

A generation ago, Cox argued that international organizations were poor grounds for Third World counter-hegemony, not least of all because such institutions were structurally keyed to advantage wealthier states (Cox 1981). The WTO did not exist when Cox wrote that and in some ways it allocates more power to developing country delegates than is the case with the IMF or World Bank. For instance, there is a tradition within the WTO of consensus decision-making and where voting procedures are in place, they act on the principle of one country, one vote. However, the WTO institution remains effectively dominated by a small group of wealthy states and is thoroughly geared towards advancing neoliberal doctrine. Even the arguments made against the Quad by developing upstarts are generally phrased in terms of free market logic, i.e. reducing government support for agriculture or preventing the spread of regulatory mechanisms like labor rights and food safety. If anything, most of this dissent sought a more consistent application of neoliberalism rather than challenging neoliberalism per se. Even if a group like the G20 managed to extract substantial concessions from the Quad in this context, it would represent less a counter-hegemony, and more of an adjustment of an existing hegemony through which a faction is brought into the fold though the offering of strategic concessions.

Chapter 7: Agricultural Exceptionalism and Anti-exceptionalism

Agricultural Exceptionalism

The exceptional position of agriculture within the WTO is demonstrated by the existence of a separate agreement specifically governing agricultural trade. This agreement left agriculture subject to less severe liberalization than other sectors subject to WTO agreements. Note that unless otherwise specified, this work uses the phrase "agricultural exceptionalism" to refer to *exceptions from* economic liberalization. As noted in other chapters, Indian governments have been strong advocates for curtailing the extremely high agricultural subsidies in the EU and US. In this sense, India has been consistently against agro-exceptionalism within the WTO.

However, Indian economic policy contains its own exceptions for agriculture, including relatively high tariffs; subsidies for certain inputs; and the Public Distribution System, which buys and sells certain products, especially food, at set prices. Indian agricultural exceptionalism is in large part a response to two overriding national priorities: food security and livelihood security. During the colonial period, India suffered from periodic severe famines, which the post-independence governments have sought to prevent through increasing food production. Food self-sufficiency was also seen as a way of ensuring India's foreign policy independence (which has been compromised by pressure from food exporters in the past). The Livelihood Security argument is based on the simple fact that most Indians are farmers. Ensuring that this vast population is capable of making a living from their land and labor is a major justification for maintaining trade barriers and subsidies.

Agriculture as Crisis

In all three TPRs, India's agricultural sector is usually portrayed in negative terms, but this is most evident in the 2007 documents. In the TPRs, agriculture is often associated with poverty, neglect, inefficiency, and under-productivity. This negative characterization is heightened by the juxtaposition with glowing praise for other sectors of India's economy, especially services. While the Indian Government, the Secretariat, and other speaking parties started from a similar set of assumptions about rural underdevelopment, they came to very different conclusions about of how to address the problem. The Secretariat, discussants, and many member representatives use the poor performance of agriculture to support their arguments for extending more liberal reform to this sector. The Government Report and the Indian representatives, on the other hand, use the perceived poverty and economic vulnerability of this sector to justify the maintenance of stronger protections here (and to appeal to their trading partners to open up their markets to Indian exports).

The first two government reports (1998 and 2002) do not dwell on rural poverty and refer to agriculture mostly to demand greater market access form India's trading partners. The 2007 Government Report, however, made rural poverty a key theme. The problem of agricultural stagnation was frontloaded to the second paragraph of the report. Here it was emphasized that in contrast to the rapid growth of the rest of the Indian economy, the agricultural sector growth rate had actually declined during the liberalization period (despite a few good years):

> Since the mid-1990s the growth rate in agriculture has dropped to 2% compared to the earlier trend rate of 2.5-3.0 percent. The growth in 2003-04 was 10% but it came down to 0% in 2004-05. The growth rate went up to 6% in 2005-06 and the advance estimate for 2006-07 puts the growth at 2.7% (WTO 2007b: 5).

The magnitude of the problem of agricultural stagnation is magnified by reference to the proportion of the Indian population dependent on this sector:

> Agriculture in India constitutes the backbone of the rural livelihood security system since it provides employment to about 58.5% of the work force (WTO 2007b: 12).

The 2007 Government Report was specifically organized so that national poverty statistics are not mentioned until a subsection entitled “Low Agricultural Growth,” thus drawing a clear and specific connection between agriculture and poverty.

> At the beginning of the new millennium, 260 million people in the country did not have incomes to access a consumption basket, which defines the poverty line. Of these, 75% were in the rural areas. It has to be noted that India is home to 22% of the world’s poor. Agricultural wage earners, small and marginal farmers and casual workers engaged in non-agricultural activities, constitute the bulk of the rural poor (WTO 2007b: 13).

In the subsequent meeting, the Indian representative reiterated this statistical portrait in his opening remarks, with if anything an even stronger identification between the rural economy and poverty.

> Over 81% of India's farmers (over 127 million cultivators) were small and marginal farmers with holdings of 2 hectares or less. In addition, there were over 100 million landless agricultural labourers. India had 22% of the world’s poor, and rural poverty was far higher than urban poverty. The development pattern had left nearly 60% of the population dependent on agriculture (WTO 2007c: 3).

The flip side of this conceptual merger between ‘rural’ and ‘poor’ is an absence of any substantial commentary upon non-rural poverty. The brief aside that “rural poverty was far higher than urban poverty” was one of the only indications from the Indian government that urban poverty existed. Perhaps the latter was simply obscured by the idea that cities were the home of the rising Indian middle class and the burgeoning high-tech service sector. Another possibility is that rural poverty was seen as more directly relating to WTO negotiations, as it bolstered the Indian negotiators’ argument against developed country farm subsidies.

The Secretariat Reports painted a similarly bleak picture of agricultural stagnation (and similarly seemed to especially emphasize it in 2007). All three of these quotes come from the 2007 Report:

> Agricultural growth continues to be slow and erratic and dependent on the weather, causing considerable distress, especially among small and marginal farmers (WTO 2007a: vii).
>
> further efforts are needed to address the [agricultural] sector's relatively low productivity and the problems of marginal farmers, reflected in social indicators, such as poverty and infant mortality (WTO 2007a: xii).
>
> Agriculture is characterized by low labour productivity, which is about one-sixth of the level in the other sectors of the economy, with obvious implications for living standards and poverty in rural areas (WTO 2007a: 99).

The last two connect the perceived shortcomings of the agricultural sector directly to poverty. The emphasis on small and marginal farmers hints at the problem of population to land ratios, which will be explored below.

Non-member speakers in the 2007 Meeting continued with the theme of agricultural underperformance. In fact, the first of the three quotes from the 2007 Secretariat Report is reproduced word-for-word in the closing remarks of Chairperson Himamen (WTO 2007c: 31) and partially by discussant Guth:

> Agriculture employed roughly 57% of the working-age population in India, but contributed only one fifth to output. Growth in agriculture continued to be slow and erratic (8).

Guth also connected his earlier discussion of poverty to the agricultural sector.

> India was a land of big contrast, combining the capacities of a first-world country with extreme poverty and underdevelopment rates. There were considerable income disparities: 35% of the population (350 million) lived below the poverty line of US$1 per day. Many of these people made their living as subsistence farmers, with limited prospect for improving their situation (WTO 2007c: 7).

While India's "capacities of a first-world country" are not explicitly identified with the urban, "extreme poverty and underdevelopment rates" are clearly associated with agriculture.

Vulnerability versus Neglect

Although they both start from a similar perception of rural poverty and agricultural backwardness, the Secretariat and the Indian Government Reports come up with very different policy prescriptions. The divergence begins with how the problem is framed. In the 2007 Government Report, the *vulnerability* of the agricultural sector is emphasized. Its relative underdevelopment justifies an exception from the logic of liberalization, a slower and more cautious approach than elsewhere in the economy. The Secretariat Reports on the other hand, see the underdevelopment of agriculture in terms of *neglect*. The lack of liberalization here is seen as at least partially responsible for the backwards state of the agricultural economy.

The Government Report uses the strong correlation between agriculture and poverty to justify its own agricultural protections as well as to argue for its trading partners (specifically developed countries) to open their markets to Indian products:

> …this *vulnerable* sector of the economy need special care and *protection* … This is the reason why India's agricultural tariffs are comparatively high in comparison to its non-agricultural ones and also of its high expectations in the negotiations in NAMA [Non-agricultural Market Access] and Services of providing substantial market access in the developed markets of the world (WTO 2007b: 13; italics mine).

Later, during the meeting of the same TPR, the Indian Representative replied to several member complaints about high agricultural tariffs by stating:

> India's tariffs on agricultural products were relatively high, but were well below the bindings. The tariffs on farm products were fixed, taking into consideration several factors including, *inter alia*, affording a reasonable degree of protection of domestic farmers, for whom farming was a livelihood issue (WTO 2007c: 20).

The Indian Government emphasizes the economic vulnerability of farmers, and worries about the unpredictable effects of sudden shifts in policy on a population already living so close to subsistence level.

The Secretariat, as noted, similarly viewed India's agricultural sector as unproductive and impoverished:

> The reasons for this low productivity include fragmented landholdings, a low level of mechanization and much of the cropped area dependent on rainfall for irrigation, which has made output in the sector rather variable; crop yields have also been declining, in part due to poor seed quality and overuse of land and inputs (WTO 2007a: 99).

However, it went on to propose that the very government programs designed to benefit farmers are hindering its development.

> The sector also remains subject to considerable government intervention, notably in the form of price support and input subsidies, which have become a fiscal burden, and restrictive marketing practices. Public investment in infrastructure and research has been inadequate and crowded out by spending on subsidies and, while private investment has grown in recent years, it has not been sufficient (WTO 2007a: 99).

Here, low productivity is attributed to, among other things, the government's allocation of scarce resources to input subsidies. The hypothesis that subsidies have 'crowded out' public investment is repeated elsewhere in the 2007 Report.

> Low productivity is due in part to fragmented landholdings, low mechanization levels, and dependence on rainfall, but also because public investment in infrastructure and research has been inadequate due to crowding out by spending on direct and indirect subsidies to the sector (WTO 2007a: xi).
>
> In agriculture... subsidies continue to crowd out public investment in infrastructure and research, and the sector remains relatively unproductive (WTO 2007a: 18).

This is another example of the Secretariat distinguishing between what it saw as productive and unproductive government spending. In agriculture, it asserted a stark either-or choice between productive investment in infrastructure and the provision of subsidies.

> Higher investment in agriculture and rural infrastructure, instead of the provision of subsidies, is a necessary condition for the sector to grow and for productivity to increase (WTO 2002a: 100).

In the 2007 meeting minutes, the chairperson and discussant, as well as many of the member representatives, expressed similar sentiment. The 2007 meeting chairperson stated in his summary remarks:

> Members noted continued government intervention in agriculture through, *inter alia*, high tariffs, price supports, and direct subsidies to inputs. Moreover, agricultural growth remains slow and erratic, causing considerable distress, especially among small and marginal farmers (WTO 2007c: 31)

The second sentence is, as noted above, a word-for-word quote from the Secretariat Report. Although not explicitly attributing agricultural distress to lack of liberalization, the juxtaposition of the two statements seems to suggest a cause-and effect relationship.

Where the Indian Government sees agricultural poverty as justification for intervention and aid, the Secretariat and likeminded commenters see the latter as a cause of continuing agricultural poverty. This enables a counterintuitive leap in the Strong Liberalization Argument, where government intervention designed to help farmers and the poor is seen as a form of neglect.

> …the agricultural sector has not been a significant beneficiary of the overall reform programme initiated in 1991 (WTO 1998a: 11).
>
> The bias that was created against agriculture has been difficult to change; efforts to reform this sector have so far been piecemeal… Reforms in the sector remain constrained largely because of the Government's commitment to the Public Distribution System, although a more targeted system may allow greater flexibility with regard to policy reform (WTO 1998a: 107).

By this logic, agriculture has been ‘left out’ of a liberalization that has benefitted the rest of the economy. Government subsidies, price controls, and food distribution are conceived as passive neglect – a ‘bias’ against agriculture - while scaling back and dismantling such programs is conceived as active concern.

Discussion of Agriculture in the Meetings

Agricultural issues were often brought up in the Meetings, especially in 2007 and to lesser extent 1998. Comments regarding India’s own agricultural policies (by non-Indian representatives) were mostly critical. Often they referred vaguely to a lack of reform in this sector; where the critiques were specific, they complained of high tariffs, subsidies, and price controls (the specific critique of India’s public distribution system (PDS) will be discussed later in this part of the chapter).

The theme of agriculture being ‘left out’ of the liberalization program was particularly prominent in the 1998 meeting:

> The representative of New Zealand noted that despite the reforms undertaken by India since 1991, much remained to be done. Little or no emphasis had been laid, for example, on reforms to agriculture (WTO 1998c: 10)
>
> The agricultural sector, for instance, was largely untouched to date, despite the commendable absence of export subsidies. He urged India not to shirk from extending its outward-oriented reform policies to this important sector (WTO 1998c: 10- 11, representative of Australia).
>
> She highlighted a number of concerns, including … little or no reform in the agricultural and labour sectors (WTO 1998c: 14, representative of the United States).
>
> …the agricultural sector had remained relatively untouched by the reform programme (WTO 1998c: 17, representative of Indonesia/ ASEAN).
>
> Hungary noted that India followed the gradual trade liberalization approach commencing with industry, and preliminary processing industries. However, agriculture had so far fallen out of the scope of these reforms (WTO 1998c: 18)
>
> …agriculture itself remained relatively untouched by the reform programme so far (WTO 1998c: 21, discussant Wells).

> Some members stated that the agriculture sector in India had been almost unaffected by the reform process (WTO 1998c: 31, Chairperson Mchumo).

The representatives of New Zealand always commented on India's agricultural sector in the TPRs, but the 1998 representative was particularly persistent, bringing it up every time he spoke. He expressed an unyielding faith in the efficacy of liberalization for agriculture:

> Although positive effects on trade in agricultural products were expected as a result of indirect effects of non-agricultural reforms, the potential for long-lasting effects of trade liberalization in agriculture were reduced or may not be achieved until that sector and related trade policies were reformed. He encouraged India to consolidate the gains made in the reform process thus far, extend the process to the agricultural sector (WTO 1998c: 10).

Later, in response to the Indian Representative's closing responses, he explained his position in terms resembling a textbook:

> Any protection, either in the form of subsidies or tariff protection, would imply that the sector did not have comparative advantage, implying that when this protection was removed, resources would move into the sector with comparative advantage. He recalled his earlier point that reforms in the manufacturing sector only scratched the surface as to the potential gains in efficiency and competiveness that could result in the agricultural sector through more direct agriculture and agricultural trade reforms (WTO 1998c: 22).

Discussant Wells, who also emphatically urged agricultural liberalization, also questioned India's reluctance to liberalize in terms of orthodox economic models:

> …while India maintained restrictive import licensing on a large number of agricultural products, and high tariff bindings, prices in India in most cases seemed to be lower than international prices. It was not clear, therefore, that India would face intense import competition if it liberalized its trade regime (WTO 1998c: 7).

Wells, in speaking of tariff bindings (which would permanently restrict India's ability to raise its tariffs in the future) fails to take into account that while India's agricultural prices were lower at the moment, this might not always be the case. Wells also explicitly connected agriculture to poverty years before it became it a major theme in the 2007 TPR, stating “the needs and costs of poverty alleviation were greatest in rural areas” (WTO 1998c: 7).

India’s agricultural sector was referenced less in 2002, perhaps because more attention was focused on the developed country farm subsidy issue at this time. There was a more focused critique by a few speakers on India’s approach to food security, with reference to the ‘grain stocks’ trope (see below). Discussant Whelan and the representatives of New Zealand, Norway, and Hungary complained about recent hikes in agricultural tariffs (WTO 2002c: 10, 17, 21, 22). The representative of Canada “encouraged the authorities to examine subsidies, particularly in agricultural production and procurement” (12), which can be partially read as an indirect critique of the PDS, as can this quote from the representative of Chile:

> The agriculture sector also needed reforms, including reduction of price controls, commercializing enterprises, exports restrictions, minimum prices, and production incentives (23).

Chairperson Mohamed made a general reference to India’s agriculture in her closing remarks:

> Members noted the importance of the agriculture sector in India and stressed the need to further liberalize it in order to develop its full potential (35).

There was more commentary on agriculture in the 2007 Meeting. Some, along the lines of most of the 1998 agriculture comments, simply called for general ‘reform’ in agriculture (WTO 2007c: 15, representative of Colombia; 17, representative of Chile). We have seen that discussant Guth picked up on the Government Report’s theme of connecting agriculture to poverty, but the only member representative to make the same connection explicitly was the one for Mexico:

> More efforts were needed to reform agriculture, the weakest sector of the economy, so as to reduce poverty. As agriculture employed a large part of the population, to integrate this population in the globalization process would be the target of reforms (WTO 2007c: 13).

Most of the other critical comments related to either low productivity (2, Chairperson Himanen; 8, Guth; 18, representative of Nicaragua; 19, representative of El Salvador) or high tariffs (10, representative of Brunei/ ASEAN; 11, representative of new Zealand; 13, representative of Australia; 16, representative of Canada; 17, representative of Argentina; 19, representative of Ecuador; 30, Chairperson Himanen). It may be worth noting that all those complaining about high agricultural tariffs, except for the representative for Ecuador, represented members of the Cairns Group.

The representatives of Zimbabwe and Nicaragua also expressed concern for India's agricultural sector, but notably did not explicitly call for liberalization here.

> Given the large rural population, particularly those largely dependent on agriculture for food and livelihood security, the agriculture sector needed urgent attention. India needed to keep the right balance between its domestic development needs and international commitments (19 representative of Zimbabwe).
>
> The problem of small and marginalized farmers, and subsequently the related food-security and rural-development issues continued to be priorities for the further development of India (WTO 2007c: 18, representative of Nicaragua).

Couching their advice in terms of 'development' rather than liberalization or 'reform' (which in the TPRs **i**s more or less a synonym for liberalization) may indicate less of a commitment to WTO orthodoxy. It is especially notable that the Zimbabwean representative separated 'development' and 'international commitments' as distinct objects, even implying competition between them.

Discussant Guth and the 2007 representative of the United States, while both taking pro-liberalization stances with regard to agriculture, made some concession to the practical difficulty of reform in this sector:

> The agricultural sector had undergone significantly less liberalization [than other sectors]. Reforming this sector was very challenging as it sustained the livelihoods of two thirds of India's vast population (WTO 2007c: 14, representative of the United States)

> While recognizing the multi-facetted dimension of the agriculture issue, he regretted that the sector was still lagging considerably behind other sectors (26, discussant Guth).

The only uncritical comment on India's agricultural sector was made by the representative of Benin in 2007, where "agricultural development" was praised in passing as part of long list positive developments in the Indian economy (WTO 2007c: 18).

Indian Defense of Agricultural Policy: We have Reformed Agriculture

The Indian representatives, as we have seen, responded to criticism that their government had not done enough to reform the agricultural sector partly by claiming that this sector's vulnerability justified caution. They also, however, emphasized that they had undertaken reforms here.

> Examples of recent reforms in the sector included improved public distribution and support price systems to take into account the interest of both producers and consumers; relaxation of restrictions on movement of food grains across the Indian States; removal of restrictions on agro-processing units; increased public investment; and some agricultural products were front-loaded in the proposed phase-out plan on quantitative restrictions. Agriculture had also benefited from other reforms, including the reduction of high tariffs and of controls on imports of manufactures. (WTO 1998c: 24).

> India had taken various initiatives [with regard to agriculture], such as progressive dismantling of restrictions on the domestic movement and export of agricultural commodities; improvement of rural infrastructure; promotion of private sector participation in agriculture; and creation of Agricultural Export Zones. The sugar and fertilizer sectors were being decontrolled in a phased manner (WTO 2002c: 5).

In 2007, when the Indian government focused on agricultural poverty, representative Pillai spent almost an entire page of meeting text describing various agricultural reform initiatives (WTO 2007c: 23- 24). Clearly, it was inaccurate to state that India's agricultural sector had been untouched by the policy reforms of the period. Those criticizing the lack of 'reforms' here, however, were conceptualizing reform as more or less identical to liberalization. Many of the reforms that the Indian representatives described were state-led, planned development schemes. Pillai began his explanation of agricultural reforms by describing their place in India's latest Five Year Plan:

> The 11th Five Year Plan, to be finalized shortly, focused agriculture on a more inclusive development process. A meeting of the Planning Commission, chaired by the Prime Minister, had been held last week, to discuss the strategy for agriculture development in the short and medium term (23).

The reforms included various areas the government sought to promote, including horticulture, irrigation, agro-processing, and research and development. There was some mention of encouraging market competition, but even these aspects included public-private partnerships and government-administered information network to report price data to farmers (23- 24). Although these plans included private participation and competitive markets, it was hardly the laissez faire approach called for by the representatives of New Zealand and other proponents of the Strong Liberalization Argument. As we have seen, the Secretariat regarded even export zones as a deviation from liberalizing orthodoxy.

Purview of the WTO

Finally, the Indian representatives defended their agricultural policies in terms of existing WTO rules. The 1998 Government Report stated:

> The only commitment India has undertaken under the Agreement is to bind its agricultural tariffs. This commitment has been fulfilled by India binding its tariffs for primary agricultural products at 100%, processed food products at 150% and edible oils at 300%. India's prevailing agricultural tariffs are well within the bound rates (WTO 1998b: 10).

The 1998 representative noted that "India's domestic support measures continued to be below the *de minimis* level [required by the Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture] and no export subsidies were being provided at present" (WTO 1998c: 31) and the 2002 representative said: "India's tariffs on agricultural products were relatively high, but were well below the bindings" (WTO 2002c: 20).

Food and Livelihood Security

The Indian government's rationale for protecting its agricultural markets to the extent that it did was summed up in the phrase 'food and livelihood security.' Food security and livelihood issues were often discussed separately, but in the 2002 and 2007 TPRs they were often connected through the use of this phrase (WTO 2002b: 16; 2002c: 5; 2007c: 19). 'Food and livelihood security' describes the two dimensions of farmer vulnerability in the same breath – consumption and production. Food security was not entirely a rural problem, of course, but it was to a substantial extent; most of the Indian population was farmers and most of the poor were farmers. Poor farmers needed on one hand to be able to sell their crops at prices at which they could make a living, which was only possible if food and other necessities were affordable with this income. Thus tariffs, price controls, and other mechanisms were in place to ensure that food prices did not get too high and that crop prices did not get too low. The Indian representatives in all three TPR Meetings made this case:

> The representative of India stated that almost three quarters of the population was dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. While reforms had taken place in the agricultural sector, the pace had been carefully calibrated so as to evaluate possible ramifications (WTO 1998c: 24).
>
> …trade policy had to be tailored to safeguard the food and livelihood security of the population, and to actively promote rural development (WTO 2002c: 5).

> The tariffs on farm products were fixed, taking into consideration several factors including, inter alia, affording a reasonable degree of protection of domestic farmers, for whom farming was a livelihood issue (WTO 2007c: 20).

The concept of food and livelihood security was not only useful in justifying protection, in regard to India itself, but also in attacking agricultural protection in developed countries (where the farmers were presumably not so vulnerable):

> …in the ongoing negotiations on the Agreement on Agriculture India has submitted detailed proposals with a view to safeguarding the food and livelihood security of the large subsistence level farming community in India and maximizing export opportunities for Indian agricultural products by seeking a reduction in the high tariffs and subsidies prevalent in developed countries (WTO 2002b: 16).

The Food Corporation of India and the (Targeted) Public Distribution System

The core of India's food security system was the Public Distribution System (PDS). For this program, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) - an agency under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution - bought certain crops from farmers at a government-set Minimum Support Price (MSP) and sold them to consumers at a government-set Central Issue Price (CIP) through Fair Price Shops (FPSs). A reformed version of the program called the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) was set up in 1997, which created a tiered system with different prices for those considered above and those considered below an officially-defined poverty line. The Indian representative in the 2002 Meeting, explaining the system, noted that additionally it was "used to generate employment, and to create physical infrastructure in the rural areas" (WTO 2002c: 33).

This set up contained a number of elements which the Secretariat and other advocates of the Strong Liberalization Argument regarded with suspicion – subsidies, price controls, state-run corporations, and complex administration (WTO 1998a: 115- 116; 2002a: 49; 2007a: xi, 103, 109- 110). The FCI operated at a loss and the Secretariat defined this loss as a subsidy:

> The subsidy is the difference between the economic cost (acquisition and distribution costs), and the Central Issue Price (WTO 2002a: 79).
>
> To the extent that the CIP does not include the cost to the FCI of purchasing, storage, and transportation, the Central Government subsidizes the FCI (WTO 2007a: 103).

The 1998 Secretariat Report described the subsidy as increasing with the rising market prices for food and other price-controlled goods:

> …the Government has faced pressure to raise minimum support prices in the face of difficulties in procuring grain, especially wheat, thus potentially increasing Government spending for the food subsidy (WTO 1998a: 121).
>
> While the minimum support and procurement prices for wheat and rice were raised each year, the Government's Central Issue Price (CIP) for the PDS remained unchanged between 1994 and the introduction of TPDS in June 1997. Subsequent increases in MSPs to align them more closely with market prices have added to the cost of the subsidy (WTO 1998a: 116).

It was also skeptical about the potential of the 'targeted' reform to moderate the increasing expense:

> The TPDS began in June 1997 and it is estimated that some 320 million people living below the poverty line will be helped, at an expected cost of around Rs 76 billion per year depending upon the level of stocks purchased; this compares to the 1996/97 cost of Rs 51.66 billion under the present PDS. The additional subsidy burden will, however, only become apparent once the amount of additional stocks purchased becomes known (WTO 1998: 115).
>
> With the introduction of the TPDS, however, it is not clear whether the increases in CIPs for the PDS and retail prices will be sufficient to reduce the cost of the total food subsidy. (WTO 1998a: 117)

It did however also note that these basic policies were unlikely change soon given the Indian government's sense of priorities:

> Progress in changing the structure of agricultural incentives and subsidies is likely to remain constrained by the Government's policy of providing support prices to farmers and ensuring low cost supplies to the population through the public distribution system (WTO 1998a: xi).

In the 1998 Report, the Secretariat's main concern with the PDS seems to be its cost in terms of government revenue. The last quote, however, suggests a disapproval of its perceived interference with market signals; "changing the structure of agricultural incentives" would be regarded as progress.

The PDS was attacked directly in the 1998 Meeting by the representative of Australia and by discussant Wells (though the discussant does not speak on behalf of the country they come from, it is worth noting that Ric Wells was also from Australia).

> Although there had been some reforms of minimum pricing and export restrictions, agriculture remained tied up in a complex web of public distribution, credit subsidies, subsidized inputs, minimum support and procurement prices, quantitative restrictions and import licensing, and high bound and applied tariff rates. He questioned whether the system, with enormous fiscal costs, was working; whether the most effective way to alleviate poverty was through public distribution and minimum prices, which sometimes discouraged farmers from providing goods; and whether India could afford the costs of subsidizing inputs to farmers (WTO 1998c: 7, discussant Wells).
>
> [The representative of Australia] urged India to re-instrument its agricultural support policies. The existing public distribution system and the provision of support prices to farmers were costly to sustain in the long-run and detracted from trade liberalization (WTO 1998c: 11).

Chairperson Mchumo reiterated these sentiments in his closing remarks:

> It was suggested that the public distribution system, with minimum prices, was a disincentive to agricultural development and an ineffective means of poverty alleviation. Some delegations urged India to extend outward-oriented reform policies to agriculture (WTO 1998c: 31).

The other 1998 discussant, See, had a more tolerant view of this system, but still described it as an impediment to liberalization:

> Expenditure on subsidies still accounted for 14% of GDP, largely for maintaining food security, e.g. farm production support, or for ensuring reasonable, low-level basic food prices for the vulnerable section of society (WTO 1998c: 6).

Use of the adverb 'still' indicates a hope or expectation that farm and food subsidies were a temporary expedient rather than a permanent feature.

The PDS was not directly mentioned in critiques in the 2002 and 2007 Meetings, but critiques of food security measures involving price controls and subsidies can be read at addressing the system. The representatives for New Zealand took the lead in denouncing redistributive food security policies in general:

> New Zealand agreed with India that the need to eradicate hunger, and to ensure sufficient domestic supplies of food to meet demand was important. However, attempts to achieve food security had created distortions in the economy, through higher support prices and financially and environmentally unsustainable input subsidies. In New Zealand's view, food security could only be achieved through open markets, rather than striving for self-sufficiency, while isolating markets led to greater climatic and input risks, and an inefficient global market. He encouraged India to take these views into account (WTO 2002c: 17).
>
> …direct and indirect subsidies on agriculture had been at the expense of public investment in infrastructure and research. While India was concerned about food security, the benefits from more market-oriented approaches could help address those concerns. He noted the moves by India's corporate sector to invest in agriculture, and new development in retail marketing (WTO 2007c: 11).

The views expressed by the representatives of Australia and New Zealand in regard to agricultural liberalization were consistent with their membership in the Cairns Group.

Overcrowding and Sectoral Migration

A key component of this rural poverty is perceived to be overcrowding in the agricultural workforce. This is supported with statistical tropes about decreasing farm size. This is again from the 2007 Government Report and describes the average farm size in India shrinking by more than 50% from 1970- 2003.

> About 81% of Indian farmers are small and marginal farmers with holdings of 2 hectares or less… The average size of land holdings has reduced from 2.28 hectares in 1970-71 to

> 1.57 hectares in 1990-91. The estimate for the average size of land holdings for 2002-03 is only 1.06 hectares (WTO 2007b: 12- 13).

Implicit in this trope is the idea that there are too many farmers and not enough land. While the Indian Government Report had put a positive spin on rapid population growth in general as a 'demographic dividend' (see above), the shrinking farm size trope implies that from the government's point of view many of these young workers were entering the wrong sector.

In the 2007 Meeting, the discussant, Eckhardt Guth of Germany, was more explicit about the need for farm consolidation:

> Largely dominated by small farmers, agriculture lacked the economies of scale to encourage the necessary investment: consolidating the sector into bigger agriculture units would be more viable (WTO 2007c: 8).

He continued along this theme by arguing for the historical inevitability of some kind of enclosure movement in India:

> India faced tremendous social and economic challenges in transforming the agriculture sector and the rural economy into an industry- and services-based economy. All developed countries had gone through this process by moving the labour force from activities with lower productivity to those with higher productivity (WTO 2007c: 8).

This would of course be contingent upon the ability of other sectors, especially manufacturing, to absorb more and more labor.

> The growth of manufacturing was particularly important in absorbing the growing labour force and in allowing labour to shift away from the agriculture sector (8 discussant Guth).

Along the lines of the Strong Liberalization Argument, he proposed that further liberalization of the manufacturing sector, including lower tariffs and the elimination of "labor market rigidities," could provide the industrial growth necessary for this task (WTO 2007c: 8).

This assumption of the necessity of sectoral migration is built into to the agricultural development strategy built into the 2007 Government Report. In many ways, the government's long-term plans to relieve rural poverty depended more on the growth of manufacturing than on the growth in agriculture. To revisit part of a longer quote used above, the 2007 Government Report links its assertions about the vulnerability of the rural population to its "high expectations in the negotiations in NAMA and Services of providing substantial market access in the developed markets of the world" (WTO 2007b: 13). NAMA stands for Non-agricultural Market Access. The reason that the report links this (and also trade in services) with rural development is because it is counting on the growth in non-agricultural jobs to siphon what is seen as excess labor out of the agricultural sector.

> …the pressure on land also needs to be relieved by providing alternative avenues of employment in manufacturing and services to the millions joining the agricultural workforce every year (WTO 2007b: 13).

The implication is that with fewer farmers, the problem of shrinking farm size can be arrested and with fewer non-landowning farm laborers, the problem of rural unemployment will lessen. Sectoral migration, it should be noted, does not necessarily imply rural-to-urban migration. The Government Report also outlines plans to expand rural industry, especially food processing (WTO 2007b: 14).

In the subsequent meeting, Pillai reiterated this plan, but also the argument for incremental and cautious reform:

> The pressure on land needed to be relieved by providing alternative avenues of employment and income, through crop diversification, and the development of rural non-farm sector, manufacturing, and services. Horticulture and food processing industries were obvious direct linkages (WTO 2007c: 3).
>
> …because of the magnitude of the task, and the complexity of the [agricultural] sector, it would take years to transform the entire sector. The pattern of development, particularly the creation of employment opportunities in the secondary and tertiary

> sectors would also have an impact on the pace of reform in the agriculture sector (WTO 2007c: 24).

The last sentence especially seems to indicate a preference to wait until *after* sufficient growth kicked in in manufacturing to pursue more radical agricultural reforms. Additionally, it is suggested in that the pace of this manufacturing (and services) growth depended on how quickly and to what degree developed economies opened up their markets

> …transformation [of the agricultural sector] would entail absorption of labour in manufacturing and services. In addition, India's domestic reform process would be facilitated if access to industrial goods and services markets in the developed countries could be accelerated. The development dimension of the Doha Development Round gave an immediate and sharp focus to this crying need (WTO 2007c: 3).

Tropes of the Agricultural Crisis: Rotting Food and Farmer Suicides

Speaking parties at the TPRs often used specific stories or tropes to illustrate their arguments. This was especially true in relation to agriculture. We have already discussed the tropes regarding the shrinking farm sizes and comparisons of agricultural growth to the growth of other sectors. Two other, more specific stories, relate to stories in the media at the times, respectively of the 2002 and 2007 TPRs, which related to and reflected poorly upon, Indian agriculture. The first is the story of 'rotting food stocks' which was current at the time of the 2002 TRP. The second is the farmer suicide story, which had garnered a great deal of notoriety for Indian agriculture by the time of the 2007 TPR.

The Food Stocks Trope

The food stocks trope was directly tied to criticism of the Public Distribution System. As seen above, the Secretariat was critical of the PDS already in 1998, mainly on account of its revenue cost. By 2002, reforms to the system (the new Targeted PDS or TPDS) had led to period where grain procurement had exceeded distribution enough to tax the storage capacity of government grain stock.

> Over the years the PDS [public distribution system] has become more targeted, while procurement by Government agencies has continued to increase (in part due to a rise in minimum support prices). The result has been a substantial increase in stocks, which greatly exceed the levels considered necessary to ensure food security, and in the costs associated with maintaining these stocks (WTO 2002a: x).

Again, the issue is costs; this time storage costs. The mechanisms behind the growth in food stocks is explained in greater detail in a later section of the Report specifically looking at the agricultural sector:

> Sharp increases in MSPs in recent years have been a major reason for a large increase in procurement volumes, which has led to the accumulation of huge surplus stocks much above the minimum buffer stock norms required for food security; for example, in January 2002, the FCI stock of wheat and rice was 58.1 million tonnes compared with the minimum buffer norm of 16.8 million tonnes. In addition, along with good grain production in recent years, the central issue price for APL [Above Poverty Line] families was raised, thereby reducing their consumption of these subsidized products. The outcome is that the associated food subsidy bill increased from Rs 28.5 billion in 1991/92 to Rs 120 billion in 2000/01. For 2001/02 the food subsidy is estimated at Rs 136.7 billion, of which Rs 56.8 billion accounts for buffer stock subsidy or the carrying cost of the public stock of foodgrains (105- 106).

The critique might at first seem to be targeted at the reform of the system, contrasting the TPDS unfavorably to the old PDS which it replaced. Specifically, reducing the consumption of poor families seems to have contributed the growth of food stocks. However, earlier in this section, the Secretariat makes it clear that it blames agricultural protectionism in general for the problem, not a specific form of it:

> Policy in this sector has been driven mainly by self-sufficiency; import and export controls, together with domestic support, have been used to ensure that domestic demands are met largely by domestic supplies. The agriculture sector has traditionally been shielded from foreign competition by tariffs and non-tariff barriers, including quantitative restrictions, import licensing, price controls (on inputs and final goods), and marketing restrictions. One important result of these policies has been an accumulation of large surplus grain stocks, which has contributed to meeting India's goals of self-

> sufficiency in food supplies; however, the food stocks now pose problems of storage and higher food subsidy costs (98).

This is an example of not questioning a reform when a problem arises with it, but rather assuming that problems are caused by the reforms not going far enough. This reasoning is clearer on the next page, where it is noted that in reference to the agricultural sector in general that “Few changes were made to these controls until recently” (99) in one paragraph and in the next notes:

> …the distortions created by these policies have recently become more evident; subsidies have continued to grow and are considered to be fiscally unsustainable; food stocks have increased because of the high support prices for producers; and misuse of inputs (water and fertilizer), due to distorted price signals, have led to environmental problems (land degradation, water-logging, depletion of groundwater resources, etc.) (99).

Recent reforms and recent problems are painted as entirely coincidental, while the latter are blamed rather on the distortions inherent in larger policy goals of maintaining food and livelihood security though government controls.

The 2007 Secretariat Report reiterates this critique, although it notes that after the excess food stocks had been sold off in 2002- 2004, “stocks fell below buffer stock requirements, requiring imports, especially of wheat” (WTO 2007a: 111). Again, it recommends further reforms along the same lines.

> There is also concern that because the FCI's costs are covered by the Central Government, it has little incentive to improve efficiency, while the targeting of the TPDS could be improved significantly (111).

The 2007 Report also added a potential causal factor to the previous overstock problem:

> There has also been a significant change in consumption patterns: per capita cereal consumption has declined while consumption of milk, eggs, horticultural products, and meat has increased... In recent years, these changing patterns of consumption, accompanied by growth in production of cereals, have resulted in a surplus of grain production, and growing costs associated with maintaining stocks of wheat and rice and

> providing certain essential foods to the poor at low prices... In this regard, the distinct bias in agriculture price support policies in favour of food grains in the past probably distorted cropping patterns and would need to be rectified (WTO 2007a: 101).

In this hypothesis, it is not merely the rise in grain prices for families officially above the poverty line under the TPDS, but also changing consumption patterns, that had resulted in the previously large grain stock.

In the 2002 Meeting, the food stock trope was brought up by discussant Whelan, but only briefly in reference to the Secretariat Report (WTO 2002c: 11). In her concluding remarks, Chairperson Mohamed noted that: "Concerns were expressed over subsidies for agricultural products and inputs, which have contributed to large grain stocks" (35). No non-India member representatives specifically referred to food stocks as being a problem. Indian representative Chatterjee even put a positive spin on by calling "51 million tons of food stocks" one of India's strong macroeconomic fundamentals in his opening statement (4), although later in the Indian replies section he addressed it as a problem which was being managed:

> Novel schemes had been established to use the food grains to set up grain banks to be used by families with inadequate income. These measures would certainly bring down the food grain stocks built up in the country (33).

Farmers' Suicides

By the time of the 2007 TPR, a series of suicides by cotton farmers, especially in the state of Maharashtra, had become international news. This negative publicity may have been one reason for the emphasis on agricultural poverty in the 2007 TPR. Various commenters came up with various explanations for the phenomenon, which are beyond the scope of this chapter. Here, we will scrutinize its rhetorical use in the 2007 TPR, which was not extensive. It was brought up once in the Secretariat Report and once in the Government Report, both of which emphasized indebtedness as a causal factor:

> …it appears that small and marginal farmers face considerable difficulty in access to credit and their share in total credit to the agricultural sector is falling. Moreover, while the share of total credit that seems to be non-institutional (i.e. moneylenders who tend to charge high rates of interest), while declining, remains significant and is likely to be especially high for marginal farmers. Indebtedness and poor harvests appear also to be the major causes for the recent cases of suicides among small and marginal farmers (WTO 2007a: 113).

> A major problem faced by the small and marginal farmers is access to institutional credit on equitable terms. It has been estimated that in the large state of Maharashtra, over 55% of the farm households are in debt. Mechanisms for risk mitigation are poor or absent. Hardly 10% of the farmers are covered by crop insurance. An unfortunate consequence of the constellation of hardships faced by small farm families is the growing number of suicides among farmers (WTO 2007a: 13).

No member representatives brought up the issue at the Meeting, but it was mentioned by discussant Guth:

> Prolonged stagnation of production, rising food prices, and indebtedness of farmers, had led to numerous suicides of farmers, which was a major national concern in India (WTO 2007c: 8).

Guth also notes the role of debt, but puts more emphasis on agricultural stagnation in general. This quote directly follows several sentences addressing low productivity, low growth, and lack of investment. He blamed the last problem on small farm sizes, and used the suicides to bolster his argument for sectoral migration (see above).

Representative Pillai did not address farmer suicides in his opening statement, despite his theme of agricultural poverty and vulnerability. He did, however, reference them in his replies near the end the end of the Meeting as part of a list of issues that had been brought up by Guth and other speakers:

> He appreciated the discussant's comments on India's agriculture, including the need to increase production and productivity. The discussant also referred to aspects such as the lack of economies of scale in farming, as well as farmers' suicides. Several Members suggested the need to protect the agriculture sector, and at the same time to undertake reforms of the sector (WTO 2007c: 23).

During his long list of agricultural reforms, he went on to mention that: “A special programme was being implemented in 31 districts where a number of farmers' suicides had occurred” (WTO 2007c: 23).

Exceptionalism and Anti-exceptionalism

As explained earlier in the chapter, what sets the Weak Liberalization Argument apart from the Strong Liberalization is argument is the greater room that it leaves for exceptions. Minimally regulated markets are held in general to promote growth in both arguments, but in the weak argument there are more limits placed on the applicability of this principle. Never is this exceptionalism more clear than in the case of agriculture. As noted above I use the term *agricultural exceptionalism* to mean exceptions from liberalization; and thus *for* the preservation of programs such as input subsidies, price controls, and government procurement and distribution.

The different solutions offered to the perceived problem of agricultural stagnation hinge on whether or not agricultural is seen as an exception to straight-forward market logic, or at least, how much of an exception. The Indian governments, especially the one in power in 2007, argues that agriculture is different from other sectors largely because it guarantees the country’s food supply on one hand and provides livelihood for most of the population on the other.

As noted earlier in chapter 5, the change in ruling parties in the 2004 election was partly attributed to rural economic dissatisfaction. The new Congress-led government moved to quickly to demonstrate its commitment to rural development with a flurry of studies and programs (including a series of stakeholder meetings which will be discussed in chapter 8). This concern is demonstrated in the TPR documents by the heavy emphasis on agriculture and rural poverty in the 2007 Government Report. The following quote (all one sentence) outlines some of schemes agricultural planners had busied themselves with between the election and the 2007 TPR:

> Programmes like watershed development in rainfed areas, expansion of irrigated areas along with efficient water resources management, agro bio-diversity and environmental protection, agro-forestry, harnessing of traditional knowledge, a regionally differentiated growth strategy for food and nutrition security, introduction of schemes for the development of allied sectors like horticulture, improvement of livestock, and fisheries, generation and transfer of technology, adequate and timely supply of quality inputs, protection of plant varieties, integrated pest management, etc. have been initiated by the government (WTO 2007b: 14).

This buzzword soup is a small sampling of ambitious measures proposed to revitalize agriculture in India's 11th Five Year Plan. The core aims boil down to increasing the growth rate of the agricultural sector, increasing farmer incomes, and diversifying production.

The Strong Liberalization Argument with regard to agriculture is partly based on a principle of anti-exceptionalism. It expects the agricultural sector to respond to liberalization in ways similar to the services sector (see section *Selectivity of Reforms* in chapter 6). If liberalization 'worked' for services (in that it was correlated with higher growth rates) and to a lesser extent for manufacturing, then it should also work for agriculture. This argument is summarized in the Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Liberalization of Different Sectors

Sector	Characterization
Services	Most liberalized, very high growth
Manufacturing	Somewhat liberalized, high growth
Agriculture	Less liberalized, low growth

In any case, it must be emphasized that the 'more-to-less liberalization' observation is just that: services have undergone *more* liberalization, but the other two sectors, even agriculture, have also liberalized in far-reaching and radical ways.

The arguments for agricultural exceptionalism in the WTO regime are not limited to either developed or developing economies, but the variety of exceptions adopted tends to vary between them. Developed economies can afford to simply subsidize production, while developing countries are forced to resort to more indirect measure such as tariffs and price controls. But aside from differences in policy instruments, the striking difference between agricultural protection in developed and developing economies is the size and economic vulnerability of the populations they are protecting. Farmers in Europe and the United States constitute a very small portion of their populations, while Indian farmers and farmers in many developing countries constitute a majority of their populations. Therefore although developed countries spend vastly more money to support their farmers, India has a much higher stake in its agriculture exceptions.

Chapter 8: Agricultural Trade Policy and Expertise in India

Chapters 5- 7 dealt with statements produced within the institutional procedures of the WTO, specifically the Trade Policy Review Mechanism. This set of statements was to a large extent (notwithstanding the roles of discussant, chairperson, and the Secretariat itself) formally modelled as being among governments. What is said or unsaid by the delegates is meant to reflect the official positions arrived at by the governments which sent them (to what extent they actually do is another question). The process by which these officials' positions are arrived at may be hinted at in this discourse (we saw, for example, that the Indian representatives sometimes made reference to the political difficulties of building domestic support for liberal reforms). For more insight into this process, however, we must look elsewhere.

Chapter 8 examines the process of agricultural trade policy formation in one country, India, by examining ideas produced within the community of policy expertise in India. As explained in chapter 4, the statements analyzed here were produced through a set of semi-structured interviews with representatives of this community, including officials and experts. Most of the informants I spoke to were economists, with agricultural economists particularly well represented. Others were civil servants, lawyers, and activists. Most worked for research institutions which can be broadly characterized as think tanks, while a few worked in the government bureaucracy or were unaffiliated. Some of these think tanks from whom I drew informants were identified prior to fieldwork by their large internet presence. Most, however, were chosen during the course of research as informants recommended possible contacts and listed think tanks besides their own which they thought were most influential.

Institutional Contexts

The government officials whom I interviewed belonged to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), or were district level administrators in the Public Distribution System. One of my informants was from the board of a government 'authority' which was attached to the Ministry of Agriculture as an advisory committee, but whose members were not technically part of the MoA. Most of the rest of my informants came from think tanks. A think tank can be broadly defined as a group of people conducting research and/ or advocacy on a certain set of issues. All of the think tanks from which I drew informants worked on issues of Indian agricultural and trade policy, although this was often one of several issues that they focused on. Not all of the groups I spoke with used the term 'think tank' to describe themselves, but most conformed to the broad definition used here. For instance, the Indian branch of the United Nations organization UNCTAD (UN Conference of Trade and Development) carried out the functions of a think tank. A complete list of the institutions from which interview subjects were drawn is provided in table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Institutions Referenced in this Chapter

Institution	Abbreviation	Web Page where available
Institute of Economic Growth	IEG	http://www.iegindia.org/
Protection of Plant Varieties & Farmers' Rights Authority	PPVFRA	http://www.plantauthority.gov.in/
National Centre for Agricultural Economics & Policy Research	NCAP	http://www.ncap.res.in/Home_ncap.asp
Agricultural Economics Research Centre	AERC	none
Department of Commerce	DoC	http://commerce.nic.in/
Department of Agriculture & Cooperation	DoAC	http://agricoop.nic.in/
WTO Centre	WTOC	http://wtocentre.iift.ac.in/
Indian Council For Research on International Economic Relations	ICRIER	http://www.icrier.org/
Research and Information System for Developing Countries	RIS	http://www.ris.org.in/
National Council of Applied Economic Research	NCAER	http://www.ncaer.org/
International Food Policy Research Institute	IFPRI	http://www.ifpri.org/
Focus on the Global South	FGS	http://focusweb.org/
Economic Research Foundation	ERF	http://www.networkideas.org/
Third World Network	TWN	http://www.twnside.org.sg/
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	UNCTAD	http://unctad.org/en/Pages/Home.aspx
Confederation of Indian Industry	CII	http://www.cii.in/
Consortium for trade and Development	CENTAD	http://www.centad.org/

My informants sometimes spoke in terms of ‘public’ and ‘private’ think tanks, based on where the funding came from. Most of think tanks in the study set fell somewhere in between, however, with some government funding and some private funding. The informants who talked about private think tanks usually cited ICRIER (Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations) as the archetypical example. Even ICRIER however was originally founded with a grant from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Many of the think tanks in the set, even if they weren't completely dependent on the government for funding, had a particular government ministry or department with whom they worked the most. For example, a group called the Research and information System for Developing Countries or RIS (which was characterized by some of my informants as *the* most influential think tank in India) worked with/ for the Ministry of External Affairs. The India Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), which includes the WTO Centre, works with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Agricultural Economics Research Centre (AERC) at the University of Delhi is funded by the Ministry of Agriculture. Some groups were associated with particular universities. ERF (Economic Research Foundation), for instance, was strongly associated with Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), while the Institute of Economic Growth (IEG) and AERC were both part of Delhi University. The WTO Centre itself was technically registered as officially as a university, offering degrees, although it focused mostly on research.

The two main funding mechanisms for these think tanks were project contracts and grants. Both could come from either the private sector or the government. The WTO Centre was funded by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the AERC by the Ministry of Agriculture. ERF had grant funding through non-governmental organizations such as the Ford Foundation and Action Aid. An FGS informant had said that his group had formerly received Ford Foundation money, but that it was cut off after they refused to remove a controversial article from their website. International agencies such as the World Bank and Oxfam also provided grants. Other groups, such as ICRIER and NCAER, relied on project-specific funding, either from the government (including state governments) or private entities. An informant with NCAER noted that government projects dried up during economic hard times, and at such times his group had to rely more on private-sector projects. He also noted that NCAER had formerly received a lot of business from state governments, but had lately been squeezed out of this market by the rise of private think tanks (he considered NCAER a public think tank despite its lack of grant-funding, perhaps because its primary mission remained to provide statistical data to the government).

Informants from the WTO Centre and the AERC were careful to stress that their organizations were autonomous for the purposes of research. Those whose groups had international connections also often made statements along the same lines. Informants from FGS and TWN asserted that the Indian branches of these organizations had a large degree of autonomy. An informant from UNCTAD India said that her office was “totally autonomous” from the rest of UNCTAD.

Flows of Information and Influence

Connections

Some of my informants rated the relative influence of the top thinks in agriculture and trade policy and provided me their interpretation of the history of think tanks in India. RIS, UNCTAD, and ICRIER were generally given as the most influential, although two of my informants were of the opinion that ICRIER was less influential at the time of the interviews than it had formerly been (these were both in the 2010 batch of interviews). Two of my informants explained that the rise of private think tanks (or probably more accurately, the ratio of private funding to mixed public-private thinks) was a recent phenomenon, starting in the 1980s. One agricultural economist, who worked for government-funded institute, complained that the government was increasingly outsourcing data collection to private groups, which was squeezing out public groups like his (he was also of the opinion that this had led to a decline in data quality). Another agricultural economist who worked for a partially-publicly funded group noted that they had formally done much work for state governments, but that this had now been taken over by the private sector. His group now specialized in the provision of national-level data, for private sector clients as well as the government. He noted that the government cannot afford to commission studies during a crisis.

My informants described a number of specific mechanisms of think tank influence over government policy. The most obvious was through projects specifically commissioned by the government with particular think tanks. It was noted that policy experts sometimes served on government advisory committees and in think thanks at the same time. One of my informants noted that government ministers sometimes attended ICRIER meetings. The WTO Centre had a very clear advisory role to the government in regard to WTO policy. I was told that some of the Centre's professors had participated in WTO negotiations and this helped to gear their research towards "what negotiators want to know." A government official directly involved in WTO negotiations emphasized NCAP as well as the WTO Centre as valued expert advisory bodies. She also mentioned NCAER, ICRIER, and UNCTAD as groups used by the government to carry out specific studies related to WTO negotiations. AERC played an important role in generating cost of production data used by the government in determining procurement prices for grain (see below). The CII acted as an industrial lobby to the government. An informant from a less well-connected group told me that he had informal contacts in the government.

There was a great deal of exchange of personnel among Indian think thanks. One of my informants (who was still quite young) said that that she had already worked for two other thinks previously. There were many researchers who went back and forth between university and think tank posts, and some moved between think tanks and international groups such as the World Bank. There was, however, very little interchange of personnel between think tanks and the government, although one informant noted that there was more now than in the past.

Another said that it was difficult for a policy expert to join the government as anything other than an advisor, but that some officials joined think tanks after their retirements from government. There were also distinctions among how reliant experts were on think tanks for their incomes. While most were full-time employees, one of my informants explained that "everyone at ERF has other jobs." The dominant field of the researchers in these think tanks was economics, followed by law. My IFPRI informant also noted that lately they had been recruiting health and nutrition specialists.

Many of the groups I spoke with were part of larger international networks. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) was headquartered in the United States, with a substantial office in India. Both Third World Network (TWN) and Focus on the Global South (FGS) were research/ advocacy organizations originating in Southeast Asia and having branched into India in recent years. Conversely, ERF was formed in India, but also acts as the secretariat of an international network of heterodox economists called International Development Economics Associates (IDEAs).

Sources of Information

Each interview included questions about what sources of information the informant consulted and considered reliable in relation to their field of expertise. Here, I was interested in how subjects gained information to base decisions on, and to more generally inform their worldviews. Those concerned directly with the WTO cited the WTO's own website as a primary source of information. Many think tank researchers cited the website of their own group and those of other think tanks as sources of information. International organizations like the UNCTAD, the World Bank, and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) were also frequently listed, as well as Indian government data and national statistical databases maintained by other governments. A few listed specific journals or newspapers, the *Economist* being the only one mentioned by more than one informant. Some also cited workshops and conferences as sources of information. Many of my informants, on the other hand were very vague about this question, answering with abstract categories like 'the internet' and 'newspapers.'

To elicit more specific responses, I eventually began to ask a follow up question along the lines of 'if there was a major development in your field tomorrow, where would you hear about it first?' Sometimes the answer was simply the TV or the internet, suggesting that they had no special access and would hear about major developments in the manner of the affluent and interested public. Others, however, described internal memo systems for their organization, specialized listserves that they belonged to, and formal and informal government contacts that would allow them to access key information before it became general public knowledge. One informant told me that the CII maintains 15 offices abroad to which report on developments in foreign countries. A Department of Commerce official said that each member of the Indian WTO delegation in Geneva had a counterpart in India that they reported to as talks progressed.

Creating Data

Many of the informants I spoke to were in the business of creating their own data. An economist at the WTO Centre said that one of his duties was to maintain a huge database of notifications submitted to the WTO by members, which was initially adapted from a similar database created by the WTO, but which he and his colleagues had subsequently greatly expanded. An UNCTAD economist described her organization collecting its data directly from surveys of farmers, traders, and consumers.

One of the major functions of the AERC was to conduct a biannual crop-cutting survey to measure agricultural productivity in different parts of India, which was used to help determine a politically vital set of 'cost of cultivation' figures. This data was generated for a subsection of the Ministry of Agriculture called the Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). One of my informants was part of an office (also in the MoA) that acted as an intermediate between CACP and the Indian cabinet. He received reports and recommendations from CACP and then used this as the basis for notes passed on to the cabinet. These cost of production and associated data sets were vitally important for Indian agricultural policy in that they were used to help determine the government's Marginal Support Prices (MPS) for rice and wheat. However, there were strong political pressures also in play when setting the MPS. The government purchased grain at the MPS to sell at subsidized prices to the poor via the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and the larger the gap between these two numbers, the larger the cost to the government (see chapter 7). Farm groups lobbied the MoA for MPS increases and higher MPS was often politically popular, but it also cost revenue and indirectly raised the market prices of grain. State governments consulted during the CACP analysis often pushed for raising or lowering the MPS based on whether their state was a net exporter or net importer of grain.

Stakeholder Input

One interesting mechanism of gathering input from farmers and others affected by agricultural trade policy was the institution of the stakeholder meeting. These came up in several of my interviews and involved multiple institutions. Many informants talked about communicating with interest groups through workshops and seminars, but a few groups in particular were involved in organizing large scale gatherings across the country specifically referred to as Stakeholder Meetings. UNCTAD and the WTO Centre facilitated these meetings and invited government officials and representatives of concerned interest groups. Such meetings are designed in large part to put the people participating in WTO negotiations in contact with the people who will be economically affected by their work.

UNCTAD and the WTO Centre do not organize these meetings directly, but rather put a call to one of the four major national industry lobbies ("Tier 1" groups in UNCTAD parlance) to organize the stakeholder representatives, which include representatives of farmers. As described above, farmers groups, lacking a strong national organization of their own, tended to join one these umbrella industry groups. According to a researcher who worked directly for one the four national industrial lobbies, this representation was patchy at best and only drew in farmers' groups that were at least regionally organized. He stated that if the CII wants to partner with farmers, it can only do so with groups that already exist: "Industry can't create them." The same WTO Centre informant who described the stakeholder meetings to me was well aware of their deficiencies in connecting to the poor. He described most of the attendees as middle managers from large companies. He was of the opinion that survey questionnaires were the best available (but still far from perfect) mechanism to get direct input from small farmers. My UNCTAD informant expressed the belief that by working with these Tier 1 organizations, UNCTAD's project had helped make them more representative of the poor.

Dissemination of Findings

Think tank informants were asked how they their groups disseminated their findings. All but one of these groups (AERC) had their own webpages. These usually contained articles or links to articles written by their members. Some had regular newsletters and internet bulletin boards. Commissioned research projects often led to papers in academic journals. Findings were also disseminated via workshops, seminars, and conferences. My informants from NCAER and UNCTAD pointed out that, in the case of a commissioned project, the findings were given to the project sponsors (often the Indian government), with the latter deciding whether or not to publicize them.

Construction of Actors and Processes

Agency in the WTO

Some of my informants were clearly pro- or anti-WTO, but most were ambivalent about it. Informants who were left-leaning were more likely to view the WTO negatively, while those who viewed the WTO in a positive light also tended to be pro-liberalization, but this was not a hard and fast rule. Many who saw the Uruguay Round as flawed remained optimistic about the Doha Round (this will be further elaborated below). Neither pro- or anti-liberalization informants seemed to think of the WTO itself as an autonomous actor. One government informant corrected me early in her interview when I referred to the relationship *between* India and the WTO. She said the use of "between" was inappropriate because the WTO itself had no separate existence apart from its members. India *was* the WTO, as were its other members. Most of my informants saw the WTO as merely an inert forum where India contended with other governments, in particular with the United States and the European Union. Strongly anti-WTO informants viewed the WTO in an almost sinister light, but viewed it as a pawn of transnational corporate interests rather than as an autonomous actor.

The Impact of the WTO on Indian Agriculture

Perhaps the question that met with the most disagreement among the officials and experts I interviewed was if and to what extent the existence of the WTO had affected Indian agriculture. One specific question I asked was if WTO obligations required the Indian state to do anything that it would not have done in any case as part of its own liberalization program? Some informants answered this with an unambiguous no. The rural officials whom I interviewed stated they had seen no impact form the WTO agreement on their locality (they were all, however, from a poor state which did not produce an agricultural surplus). A Ministry of Commerce official stated that there was some controversy over this point, but that she thought the empirical evidence pointed to there being little impact, though she then qualified this by saying it may have helped exports. Others pointed out that most of the limits the WTO placed on agricultural protections were above those India had in place at the time.

Many of the informants pointed to two specific instances where the WTO directly impacted Indian agriculture. One was the removal of India's system of quantitative import restrictions (this is an instrument to cut off imports once they pass a certain amount, rather than simply taxing them). Quantitative restrictions (or QRs) were deemed illegal in the Uruguay Round, except under certain conditions, which the WTO's Dispute Settlement Mechanism determined that India did not meet in 2001. This affected some agricultural products.

A larger impact seemed to be the virtual elimination of the tariffs on (non-cotton) oilseeds. The Indian government made an exception from its usual agricultural protection policies to include this tariff line in batch to be reduced during the Uruguay Round. One informant described this as "wiping out" oilseed farmers and small-scale oilseed processors. Another described it causing oilseed farmers to switch to other crops (especially wheat, which had a guaranteed market though the PDS). But there was general agreement that an impact had been made here. One informant noted that oilseeds had been added to the tariff elimination list under pressure from the United States, but Brazil had been the exporter that benefitted most from this market opening.

Beyond these specific impacts, a few experts pointed to two more intangible effects of WTO membership. One was the influence of *expectations* on policy and markets. At the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, there was a widespread optimism that the creation of the WTO would result in lower agricultural trade barriers globally and that this would lead to an export boom for India, especially to developed economies. One of my informants also suggested that the expectation of an agro-export boom marshalled some crucial farmer support for India to sign on to the original agreement. These hopes were eventually dashed upon Quad intransigence on farm subsidies and the capacity for health and safety regulations to act as non-tariff barriers to Indian exports. Although export markets did not live up to expectations, preparations for them altered the behavior of economic actors, especially the government itself, which instituted numerous programs to promote agricultural exports. Further, the convergence of the WTO's creation, India's liberalization program, and the height of the Washington Consensus in the 1990s, may have created a general trend of liberalization as 'common sense,' the effects of which went well beyond the letter of WTO law.

Finally, some of my informants brought up the issue of *policy space*. While most WTO obligations may not have required the alteration of existing policy, they did have the effect of limiting the possibility of future changes in policy. As one informant put it, India's autonomous liberalization program, not the WTO, initially lowered agricultural tariffs; but the WTO had resulted in the subsequent *binding* of these tariffs, which set a quantitative maximum amount for tariffs (as a percentage of market value). By doing this, the Indian government gave up the right to change its mind in the future. To make a visual analogy, India walked through the door, but the WTO locked it behind them. The policy space within which tariffs operated was now smaller.

Interpretations of Past, Current, and Future Negotiations

Some way into an interview with a senior agricultural policy advisor, I realized that an important question about the benefits of WTO membership had led to a misunderstanding. This was an important lesson in formulating my questions more clearly, but it also revealed an important distinction in how Indian policy experts viewed the WTO at the time. The expert was describing the benefits of multilateral negotiation in principle and all of the gains developing countries had made because the WTO was based on this principle. When I asked him for clarification on what specific gains he meant, we realized that I was talking about the WTO as a set of finalized agreements in force as international law and he was talking about the WTO as a negotiating process. I was thinking of the static, finished, and signed Uruguay Round and he was thinking of the current Doha Round, where nothing had been signed and the negotiating process continued in Geneva even as we spoke. When he realized this he paused and said “Nothing I’ve said you should think of as applying to the Uruguay Round.”

He was not the only expert that I spoke to who expressed ambivalence about the Uruguay Round, while remaining relatively positive about the WTO in general. One the agricultural economists I interviewed stated that India had been “unprepared for the Uruguay Round,” although he argued that the UR agreements contained some provisions that were very favorable to developing countries if only they could be properly exploited. But, in the sense that he was speaking of interpreting existing WTO law in a way more favorable to India and the developing world, he too was speaking of a dynamic negotiating process. The advisor I discussed in the last paragraph went on to say that "developing countries did not take it [the UR] seriously enough."

An ICRIER trade economist explained to me that "GATT was a two-tiered organization" and that countries like India and Brazil, although they had always been GATT members, were mainly "just attendees." Most of the trade liberalization prior to the Uruguay Round was among developed countries and thus when GATT transformed into the WTO it was "better adapted to developing country needs." GATT also lacked a strong, formal enforcement system like the WTO's Dispute Settlement Mechanism. A lawyer who specialized in WTO trade disputes told me that India had expected the Uruguay Round to be "soft law," which I take to mean something that is not really binding, that could be easily side-stepped or evaded – something more like the GATT agreements that had preceded it.

The attitude towards the Doha Round, at least among the pro-WTO informants, was a different story. Even though the round had not been concluded (and still is not as of this writing), there was at least in my 2008 batch of interviews a great deal of optimism that they would be concluded with favorable conditions for India. There was reasonable hope at the time (at least according to my two informants who were closest to the negotiations) that the US and EU were on the verge of making a major concession on subsidies. India, the G20, and the developing world in general had proven that they could bargain hard and stand up to the Quad in the WTO. Even some of the anti-WTO policy experts I interviewed noted that the bargaining power of developing countries had increased. An economist specializing in international intellectual property rights told me that from 2001- 2010 (he was in the second batch of interviewees in late 2010), there had been an "incremental advance in developing country interests" in the WTO, but "after 15 years the benefits are not visible."

A few of the anti-WTO informants viewed the rising profile of India in the negotiations in an almost sinister light. One informant described the Indian government as "playing a double game" with developing and developed countries and as "drifting toward a role as one of the hegemons." Another who worked in the Indian branch of an international research/ advocacy group, said in 2010 that the Indian delegations are now "being told to look more to India's interest rather than their allies' interests" and that "India's interests" in this case "is really only the interest of 40,000 IT workers."

In my 2010 interviews, optimism about the WTO negotiations had largely evaporated, and the WTO seemed increasingly irrelevant. When I asked a food security specialist how important the WTO was to her institute's research, she said that it would be important "if anything were happening there." Many of the 2010 informants were far more interested in a series of free trade agreements or FTAs that India was negotiating with specific groups of countries (particularly at the time the EU and ASEAN). These were seen by them as less of compliment to the Doha Round than as a replacement for it. As one trade specialist working for one of the big Indian chambers termed it as the government "shifting its ambitions" from the WTO to FTAs. On one hand this was a way to bypass the recalcitrance of the United States in the WTO. In another sense, it was a way for the government to continue its trade liberalization program without attaching it to the negative public image the WTO had gained in India. One informant described this as "liberalization through the back door." FTAs had a lower profile than the WTO and another informant explained that farmers were less aware what crops were on the table for tariff reductions.

Food Security

Some of my informants talked about the importance of food self-sufficiency to India. An official in the Ministry of Agriculture, who was elsewhere critical of government intervention in agricultural markets, stated “you can’t rely on international markets to feed a billion people.” This mirrors similar sentiment seen in the Indian delegations to the TPRs reviewed in chapters 5-7. Beyond being a practical concern with the most effective way to feed its population, food self-sufficiency was also connected to the independence of India’s foreign policy. Two my informants (including the official above) brought up a diplomatic episode in the 1960s where the United States threatened to withhold food aid during an famine in India unless India toned down its opposition to the U.S. intervention in Vietnam. This constituted something a national humiliation for the India government and encouraged the government to pursue food self-sufficiency more zealously.

Stakeholder Dimensions and the Construction of Farmers

In a country of 700 million farmers, it is important to examine how policy-makers and experts see this population. I asked each interview subject to roughly categorize and describe different interest groups in India in regard to agricultural and agricultural trade policy, including the relative influence of each. Answers were varied, but some commonalities emerged.

The first division almost all the informants made was between big and small farmers, or often big and “small and marginal” farmers. Most Indian farmers fell in the small and marginal category. More than one of them pointed out that the category of ‘big farms’ here was relative to India, where farms were not typically large by global standards. A big farm in India would not be considered a big farm in the United States. Still, there was a distinction drawn based on the relative size of the farm. Those informants that went into enough detail to define this divide systematically tended to do so in terms of production and consumption. A big farm was one that could support its owners and have a surplus to sell. A small or marginal farm was one that could barely or could not support the owners. This would include subsistence farms that grew food entirely or mostly to feed the family growing it, as well as farm families that could not support themselves with their land and had to supplement their income with wage work or subsidize their consumption through credit. In practice, one expert told me, this divide was not so simple and most farmers managed to sell at least some of their produce.

The division of economic interest between these two groups was mainly based on food prices. An official in the Ministry of Agriculture went into the most detail here, explaining that "net consumers" (farmers that consumed more food than they produced) had an interest in keeping food prices low, while farmers that produced more than they consumed preferred higher prices. The government tried to keep this delicate balance in check via Minimum Support Prices and the Public Distribution System. It subsidized the production of certain crops (mainly grain) by buying them from farmers at a guaranteed price and then selling them to consumers (who met certain income requirements) at a loss. The higher the MSP or the lower the PDS price, the greater the government's revenue loss. Big farmers lobbied for higher MSPs, while lower food prices were popular with consumers. One trade policy expert explained that this government between the opposing interest of producers and consumers was successful enough that the two were "not usually framed as opposites."

Another dimension of farmer interest was pictured at the regional level. Some states, like Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, and Haryana, had prosperous (relatively speaking) commercial agricultural sectors and sold their surpluses to other states and on the international market. Groups in these states tended to be more interested in keeping the support prices (mainly for wheat and rice) and tariff protection high. However, there was some interest among commercial farmers, especially from the prosperous agricultural states, in opening export markets. This did not necessarily lead them to whole-heartedly support trade liberalization and the WTO project (after all, commercial farmers sold far more in the protected domestic market than they did abroad), but it seems to have moderated resistance to it.

There was also some division of interest described between agriculture and industry, particularly industries that used agricultural inputs, like textiles and food processing. These stood to benefit from lower agricultural prices. Finally, there was some divide specific to certain crops. The MSPs were important to rice and wheat farmers. Some cash crops (i.e. mangoes) had bigger export markets than others. Farmers in Southern India tended to be more concerned about an FTA with ASEAN, because they were more likely to grow the same kinds of crops as Southeast Asia.

Many of my informants emphasized that Indian farmers were not well-organized on the national level. Some were organized on a state-level, especially in the agro-surplus states like Punjab. A CII informant blamed the lack of organization of farmers in many states on caste-politics and lack of land reform. He reasoned that here caste loyalties trumped farmer solidarity and lack of firm land-tenure fostered a disinterest in investing in land improvement. He was the only informant that mentioned caste politics, but not the only one who correlated lack of land reform with lack of farmer organization (again, this study cannot speak directly to the accuracy of such hypotheses, only their place in constructing policy arguments).

Informants described a variety of mechanisms through which farmer interests were filtered into national politics. Many suggested that WTO membership was unpopular among farmers, but it was not and had never been a major election issue. One WTO specialist described WTO issues as “mainly a debate among intellectuals,” not of concern to average voters. Another informant from a left-leaning think tank insisted that the WTO was always an election issue, even before 1995, in the negotiations leading up the WTO's creation. A Ministry of Agriculture informant suggested that WTO membership would become an election issue if the Indian government accepted a "bad deal" in the current Doha Round negotiations. Both of the major national parties, Congress and the BJP, were described as being pro-liberalization, but both having to carefully consider farmer interests, since the latter constituted the bulk of voters. Farmers (especially small farmers) were described by some informants as having more influence in left-wing parties and regional parties (which often played a role in coalitions led by larger parties).

Without an effective national organization for farmers, regional farm lobbies tended to join the national industrial lobbies, like the CII or FICCI. This was also true of agricultural processors and traders. This is reflected in the organization of stakeholder meetings described above. My CII informant insisted that farmer groups had a real influence in CII internal politics. He provided as an example an internal CII debate about whether or not to actively lobby for the creation of "Walmart-type" agro-retail chains in India. While this proposal had support from many quarters within the CII, it was ultimately left off of their lobbying agenda because of the lack of consensus.

It was noted by many of my informants, including those in the Ministry of Agriculture and in think tanks with formal advisory roles to the government, that large farmers had more political influence than small farmers. Where effective farm organization existed, large farmers tended to dominate the organizations. Coalitions of large and small farmers may have a common interest in lobbying for higher MPS, agricultural subsidies, and protected domestic markets, although some of my informants were of the opinion that large farmers benefitted more from these things than small farmers. For example, my MoA informant even suggested that small and marginal farmers who were net food consumers might suffer if high MPS led to higher market and TPDS prices for food.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the chapter, some advantages and disadvantages of examining hegemonic processes from the “middle” were noted. The population studied could not shed much light on the subject position of agricultural producers and some of my informants were frankly baffled by the thinking of top-level decision-makers. However, their positions are as intermediaries provided them a unique vantage where they could ‘see’ the former and the latter within the same frame. This is why their descriptions of group actors and processes were so valuable. Connected to large-scale mechanisms for gathering information on farmers and producing ideas used by government decision-makers, these actors and the narratives and logics they put together occupied an exceptionally powerful position.

Many of the informants that I spoke to expressed the belief that they were receiving information on farmer interests through imperfect and sometimes distorted lenses. Small farmers had less of a voice in national discourse than large farmers, and thus the concerns of the latter were often portrayed as the concerns of farmers in general. Another layer of distortion was introduced by farmer groups joining industrial lobbies to act to gain access to the latters’ well-established channels of influence. They thus described a sort of double hegemony of large farmers over small farmers and industry groups over farmers in general. This may partly explain how enough popular support or at least acquiescence was organized for India to join the WTO.

They also described an Indian government which seemed to be committed to the idea of liberalization and multilateralism regardless of which party coalition was in power. There seemed to be a sentiment here that even an imperfect multilateral trade institution was better than none at all. Some informants thought that India might have conceded too much in the Uruguay Round, but held higher hopes for the Doha Round. By 2010, when the Doha Round was looking increasingly less promising, there was a sense that FTAs had become an alternative means to multilateral trade liberalization.

The intellectual milieu in which these informants participated had undergone substantial change in their lifetimes. The rise of think-tanks, especially those privately funded and internationally connected, was described as a phenomenon of recent decades. It was suggested by one informant that university intellectuals tended to be more skeptical of liberalization than think tank intellectuals (although many intellectuals participated in both worlds). It may be that the rise of the think tanks may have helped pave the way for liberalization (and perhaps vice-versa).

Chapter 9: Conclusions

This dissertation has presented an empirical case study of the development of agricultural trade policy in conditions of overlapping sovereignty between a multilateral law-making body and a large developing country. In doing so, it has provided a number of insights into the interaction of neoliberal discourse, international organizations, and sovereign states. These insights contribute to political geography and related literatures in at least three broad areas. In relation to the literature on policy transfer and policy mobilities, this dissertation finds that although the World Trade Organization does push a standard set of liberalization policies, there remains much flexibility and opportunity for creativity in their practical implementation. Policy transfer to India involved some obligatory or 'coercive' elements (most notably, the outlawing of quantitative restrictions in 2001), but overall India's liberalization program was, in Dolowitz and Marsh's (1996, 2000) terms, mostly a case of voluntary transfer. With regard to the literature on neoliberalism, this research found that the WTO Secretariat played a large role in maintaining neoliberal orthodoxy in the WTO, even if this worldview did not necessarily reflect the convictions of all or most of member governments. Analysis of the Secretariat Reports and other TPR documents was instructive in fleshing out some patterns of neoliberal argumentation which might help to explain its persistence in the face of policy failure. The analyses presented in chapters 6 and 7 also illustrated that neoliberal principles do not always work in favor of developed countries, and can be used to, for instance, attack farm subsidies in the United States and European Union. This observation also has implications for the Neo-Gramscian literature, in that it shows an institution created to bolster hegemonic power (in this case the US and EU), can also serve as an arena in which these powers can be contested.

The two methodological components, one archival and the other based on individual interviews, looked at the issues described above from quite different vantage points. The first emphasized statements made in highly formal circumstances and filtered through procedures and processes which tended to efface individual authorship and promote an image of states and institutions personified in mostly unnamed representatives. The second, conversely, took into account the individual informants' specific position within one or more interlocking institutions, the flow of information and authority to and from them, and their personal interpretations of the processes, events, and actors involved in the formation of agricultural trade policy. The juxtaposition of both vantage points not only broadens the perspective on the objects of research, they in some ways correct for the shortcomings of each other. For instance, the individual and anonymous viewpoints of experts and officials in India (some of whom had direct links the WTO negotiations, but all of whom contributed to related policy debates within India one way or another) hinted at the processes behind the personifications of "India" represented in the TPRs and other WTO forums.

In chapter 1, the following eight research questions were presented:

1) What are the positions and strategies of the Indian government in the WTO system, especially with regard to agriculture?

2) How has the Indian government presented WTO membership and its consequence to the public?

3) How is the WTO and its relation to Indian agriculture understood and represented among the policy expert community in India?

4) What, if any, are understood (by officials and experts) to be the specific effects of the WTO agreements on Indian agriculture?

5) What do the first four questions suggest about the configuration of hegemonic knowledge production across transnational, state, and expert spaces?

6) How does hegemony work within the WTO?

7) How can we conceptualize the articulations of sovereignty between an individual sovereign state and an institution of transnational governance?

8) Can questions six and seven tell us why developing countries remain in the WTO?

At the conclusion of this dissertation, I can state that these questions have been answered, at least in a tentative and suggestive fashion.

India in the WTO

The positions which the Indian government takes within the World Trade Organization were explored in chapters 5- 7, specifically through the analysis of the TPR Government Report and through the statements of the Indian representatives in the Meeting Minutes. These statements trumpeted the success of India's liberalization program, which was in broad agreement with the statements of the Secretariat and other Meeting speakers. They also, however, insisted that India's liberalization program must remain autonomous, cautious, and based on political consensus. The representatives of India took especially firm positions regarding agriculture. On one hand, they criticized the hypocrisy their developed trading partners for asking developing countries to open their markets while refusing to make real concessions on their own agricultural protections. The 1998 Indian Government Report expressed this sentiment well before the G20 formed around this issue:

> The retention of domestic subsidies at a high rate by many developed countries continues to give us cause for concern. In our view, the clamour for greater market

access for agricultural products would carry more conviction if a definite effort is also made to force the pace in respect of bringing down such subsidies (WTO 1998b: 10).

On the other hand, the Indian representatives insisted that in its domestic agricultural markets, considerations of food security and livelihood security took priority over free market ideology.

Discerning the strategies behind these positions is a murkier proposition, but a careful reading of the text suggests at least three likely strategic considerations. First, the very neoliberal principles which developed country governments had been preaching for years could be turned against them. The representatives of India used the rhetoric of neoliberalism to attack the EU and the US for their protectionism. In this way, they turned the tenets of the Washington Consensus against its own key proponents, making Quad criticisms of India's protections ring somewhat hollow.

Second, India could argue from a position of leadership among developing countries. Indian speakers often framed their interests as the interests of the developing world in general. After 2001, they had a rhetorical asset in the thematic prominence of development in the Doha *Development* Round. Marshalling the support of developing country representatives was an important strategic move, as developing countries constituted the bulk of WTO membership. Developed countries may have had larger economies and more powerful governments, but they were decidedly outnumbered.

Finally, I believe that the Indian government is willing to forego a substantial reform of the WTO in the Doha Round if this does not include enough concessions to Indian and other developing country interests. From my discussion with policy experts, described in chapter 8, I suspect that the Indian government would like to see a new WTO agreement, but would prefer no deal to a bad deal.

The material in chapter 8 suggests that the original political consensus built in India was partly based on the expectation that the WTO would allow for expanded agricultural export markets. Whether or not this is how the Indian government portrayed the situation in its official publications is a question that must await future research. The institution of stakeholder meetings, also described in chapter 8, suggests that the government of India at the time was concerned with the political mood of agricultural leaders with regard to liberalization and the WTO.

Chapter 8 made clear that the policy expert community in India viewed the WTO as a negotiating forum rather than as a group actor in of itself with any autonomous agency. Actors seen as opposing India's interests were individual members within the WTO, particularly the EU and the United States. To some left-leaning experts, the actors seen as opposing the interests of India's farmers were corporate interests, both domestic and transnational, with which the WTO and the governments that composed it were complicit. Among pro-WTO experts, there was often a clear distinction made between the WTO of the Uruguay Round and the WTO of the Doha Round. The former was often viewed as flawed, although perhaps necessary. The latter was viewed as a useful and promising process, which may or may not lead to gains for India. There was a sense that multilateral negotiations were a good in of themselves. Perhaps the Indian state gained diplomatically from its high profile in the negotiations whether or not they led to substantive new agreement or not.

Chapter 8 also showed that there was a great deal of disagreement among experts as to if the WTO had had an impact on Indian agriculture. Some saw little or no effect, while others saw limited specific effects like the decline of non-cotton oilseed production. Those who saw severe negative impacts on Indian agriculture were likely conflating WTO-specific impacts with liberalization in general. This conflation may have some merit, however, as the expectations that were raised by WTO membership may have helped to facilitate these reforms. WTO membership also locked in prior unilateral liberal reforms, making them difficult to reverse and reducing the government's policy space.

Hegemonic Politics and Neoliberalism in India

The material in chapter 8 suggested the following hegemonic schematic within the agricultural political economy of India. Small farmers had few and limited channels of influence in national politics, but they had some leverage in numbers. A Ministry of Agriculture informant told me that the Indian government's conservatism in agricultural liberalization was because it "can't risk the pauperization of the agricultural population." Large farmers were more organized and had more voice in national politics, and exercised a degree of influence over small farmers, acting as the political spokespeople for farmers in general. This was not necessarily disadvantageous to small farmers where their interests corresponded to those of large farmers. One potential conflict between small and large farmers over the price of food was smoothed over by the mechanisms of Marginal Support Prices and the Targeted Public Distribution System. The large farmers whom were net producers of food benefitted from higher MSPs, while the smaller farmers whom were net consumers benefitted from subsidized food prices. Likewise, the large umbrella groups like the CII and FICCI helped to smooth over the differing interests of industry and farmers, by incorporating farmer groups into their organizations. Overall, it appears that Industrial capitalists are the dominant partners in a hegemonic structure that incorporates large farmers and through them small farmers as well. This hegemonic sketch, it must be reiterated, is a product of the policy discourse of experts and officials. It would be an interesting subject of future research to investigate how closely it captured actual conditions on the ground.

Chapter 8 suggested that the ascendance of pro-liberalization sentiment among Indian intellectuals was related to the rise of privately-funded think tanks in India. This may suggest a hypothesis that the rise of neoliberalism in India has been similar to the rise of neoliberalism in the United States in the role played by business-funded think tanks (Harvey 2005; Peet 2003; Stone 2004). The great size of the Indian economy, which gives it more bargaining power in the WTO, than a typical developing country, also makes it more resistant to the top-down mechanisms of neoliberalization imposed on smaller developing countries by global governance bodies like the IMF and World Bank through structural adjustment programs (not completely resistant as shown by the IMF's role in stimulating the start of India's liberal reforms in 1991). For neoliberalism to take root here, it must work through indigenous intellectuals.

Hegemonic Politics and Neoliberalism in the WTO

Analysis of the three TPRs examined in chapters 5- 7 revealed more than just a critique of Indian trade policy. For one thing, the volume of statements attributed to advanced economy members substantially outweighed that of (non-Indian) developing country members. If meeting wordcounts are any indication, then developed members, especially the European Union and the United States, are accorded a position of intellectual authority and deference when it comes to economic critique. It is also notable that all four discussants (recall that the 1998 TPR featured two discussants) were from developed countries, and two of them were from EU countries. On the other hand, although advanced economy wordcounts were always greater than non-India developing country wordcounts, this ratio decreased in the Doha Round. These numbers support the hypothesis that developing countries have increased their bargaining power in the WTO during the Doha Round, but that this only goes so far. The wordcount percentage for developing countries peaks in 2002 at 22% coming close to matching the advanced economy percentage (25.5%); I hypothesize that this can be attributed to building frustration and assertiveness among developing country delegations which would subsequently come to a head at the Cancun Ministerial the following year.

The Secretariat Report in many ways occupies a dominant position in the TPR process. Not only is it the longest of the documents produced, it also has the privilege of going first. Consequently, they set the tone for the rest of the review process. The Government Reports are forced into a position of having to respond to the Secretariat's arguments, while speakers in the meetings make frequent reference to the Secretariat Report to bolster their arguments. Like the member representatives, the authors of the Secretariat Report are de-individualized, but unlike the former they are not taken to represent a member country with specific material interests. Rather they personify an institution which is supposed to represent all WTO members. This aura of neutrality lends credibility to the arguments expressed in Secretariat Reports. These arguments are presented therefore as neutral, technocratic advice with no agenda outside that of the collective interests of all WTO members. Like the Secretariat, the discussants also played a role of expressing policy critique unattached to the official positions of any member governments. And like the Secretariat, this independence bolstered their claim to neutrality

Analysis of the content of the three Secretariat Reports, however, casts doubt on the picture of unbiased technocratic neutrality. Chapter 6 shows that the Secretariat Reports present arguments based solidly on neoliberal principles, what I have called the strong liberalization argument. The sequence of logical dependencies at the heart of the strong liberalization argument is that liberalization leads to economic growth and that economic growth in turn reduces poverty. On the other hand, India and many of the representatives in the meetings express less extreme versions of liberalization arguments, which I have called the weak liberalization argument. If the Secretariat equally represented the views of all member states, it stands to reason that its arguments would not be so skewed to the neoliberal end of the spectrum of economic theory. The work here thus supports the view that the Secretariat in biased in favor of neoliberal logic, which does not necessarily represent the views of many WTO members (Peet 2003; Jawara and Kwa 2004). Therefore, when the Secretariat sets the tone for the TPR, it presents neoliberal doctrine as the default starting position for discussion.

The strong liberalization arguments which start out the TPRs, do not, however, remain uncontested. The Government Reports argue for a less extreme version of liberalization, both slower in pace and open to more exceptions to neoliberal logic. These views also find some support in the meetings. Furthermore, the liberal reforms that India is described as pursuing or as having already adopted are often unorthodox applications of neoliberal policy. Strong exceptions to free market principles were carved out for agricultural support and food subsidies. Principles like food and livelihood security trumped free market principles. Further, some liberal reforms were implemented selectively in such a way as to promote industrial growth (i.e. lower tariffs on industrial inputs than consumer goods and the creation of special economic zones). If the WTO is a mechanism for diffusing neoliberal economic policy, then India is an example of how this diffusion leads to innovative hybridization and adaptation rather than to a straight-forward homogenization of global economic policy.

As to why developing countries remain in the WTO, this research can only suggest a few tentative hypotheses for one developing country. We explored a possible reason for India's initial acceptance of the Uruguay Round agreements – a mistaken expectation of new agricultural markets in developed economies. The convergence of the WTO's agendas with India's autonomous liberalization certainly made membership easier. The material in chapter 8 suggested that perhaps there was a preference for multilateral negotiations in Indian political culture. Perhaps a reason for India remaining in the WTO and pursuing a resolution to the Doha agenda is an underlying conviction that the multilateral process will eventually pay off for India. We suggested above that even if there is no pay off, India's international profile might be raised by the negotiations. It may be that India's adherence the WTO encourages other developing countries, which Indian representatives sometimes implicitly claimed to speak for in the TPRs, to themselves remain in the WTO.

Questions of Neoliberal Hegemony

India has undergone far-reaching liberal reform since 1991, but can these reforms be characterized as neoliberal or part of global neoliberalism? We can see more use of market competition as a disciplinary and regulatory mechanism, trade used as a growth engine, and an overall reduction of formal government intervention, but such policies are present in many variations of capitalism, not merely a neoliberal variety. The Indian economy does not by any stretch of the imagination approach the extreme market utopian vision of neoliberal philosophy. At the same time, the tendency, moving away from state planning and protected markets, gives the impression of a 'pull' in the direction of a globally hegemonic neoliberalism. Harvey (2005) has made this type of argument concerning the earlier liberalization program undertaken in China. There may be some truth to this idea, but it must also be emphasized that the 'pull' may also work in the other direction. India's liberalization program may have helped to prop up global neoliberal discourse by providing something that looked like a success story for liberalization.

The idea of India as a 'success story' for neoliberalism is indicative of a form of neoliberal argumentation common in the TPR documents. If some amount of liberalization has been successful, it then follows that further liberalization would lead to even more success. The converse of this is that when liberalization has failed or has not lived up to liberalization, this is because liberalization did not go far enough or was 'incomplete.' Both of those arguments were used extensively in the TPRs, especially in the Secretariat Reports, as demonstrated in chapter 6. As long as neoliberalism is never implemented in its most extreme forms, its proponents can always argue that successes of partial liberalization are attributable to neoliberal practices while failures of such reforms result from lingering non-neoliberal policy practices.[13]

Peck, Brenner, and Theodore (2010a) argue that neoliberalism is often called upon to solve crises which it has caused. If this is the case, then the denial mechanism described above – any neoliberal policy failures are the result of not being neoliberal enough – may be an important component of this cycle. The very tendency of neoliberal policy to be subject to local adaptation and mutation then bolsters the failure-proof argumentation tactic. If the policy is successful, it is proof of neoliberalism's efficacy; if it fails, then it is the unorthodox aspects of the policy which is to blame. This poor sort of logic may be behind what Peck, et al (2009) refer to as 'zombie neoliberalism.'

Collapsing Hegemony or Expanding Hegemony

According to Cox (1981), the United States lost its role as the sole hegemon of a world order as far back as the 1960s. By Cox's logic, then, we are solidly within a non-hegemonic world order at the present. But, I find it rather limiting to think that hegemony can only exist on a global scale if one country is dominant. Another model of global hegemony could be based on a small group of countries with similar interests co-exercising a hegemony over the rest – a US-EU axis, the Quad countries, or even developed countries in general. We need not even think of global hegemony in terms of states, if we ascribe to the idea of a rising transnational capitalist

[13] To be fair, this form of argumentation could be used to justify almost any economic doctrine

class (TCC), as suggested in Sklair 2000. Following Harvey (although he is ambivalent about the term TCC), neoliberalism can then be seen as a project of this class to everywhere turn economic policy to their advantage.

If the Quad (the US, the EU, Japan, and Canada) did exercise hegemony over the rest of the WTO members at the start, then this seems to have been challenged in the Doha Round by increasingly assertive developing country members, especially India and other emerging economies. But is this challenge counter-hegemonic or is simply a case of the hegemony expanding to co-opt a new group of subsidiary members? It has been pointed out that India and the G20 use neoliberal logic to attack farm subsidies and other perceived trade barriers in the United States and the European Union. If anything, this reinforces the position of neoliberalism as a dominant discourse. On the other hand, India also argues in the WTO from policy positions like special and differential treatment and food security, with decidedly un-neoliberal tones.

India's positions as a member of the WTO's new inner circle (that is, it's inclusion in a series of exclusive high-level negotiations among the most powerful WTO members) and as a representative of developing country interest in general may serve to help stabilize a neoliberal hegemony over the developing world. But if so, it may be doing so in such a way as to secure certain exceptions from liberalization for food security and special and differential treatment as the price of compliance. It remains to be seen whether or not such a grand bargain will ever be struck to secure an end to the Doha Round.

Closing Thoughts

The example of India shows that policy transfer via the WTO has not lead to a homogenous world policy regime. India's liberalization program is often held up as a success story for neoliberalism, but it is hardly a case of neoliberal orthodoxy. The Indian government has adopted liberal reforms selectively and has carved out exceptions for food security and other aspects of economic policy. On the other hand, Indian liberalization does have a directionality moving towards more liberalization and there is still international pressure, especially through contemporary Doha Round negotiations to continue in this direction. However, in the wake of the Great Recession, global neoliberalism may not be able to exert the same pull it once did.

A key purpose of this research was to describe in tentative fashion what sort of power balances are at work in the overlapping sovereignty realms of the WTO and the Indian state. It seems to me that developed countries and especially the old US-EU axis remains in a dominant position in the WTO, but that this dominance is not as strong as it once was. The primary reason for this is the rising bargaining power of the G20, including India. The Indian state has two great advantages in its struggle to secure a favorable outcome to the Doha Round. First, it has widespread (though not total) legitimacy as a representative of developing countries, which constitute most of the WTO membership. Second, it is on the side of neoliberal orthodoxy in its argument against developed country farm subsidies.

On the other hand, the Indian government is constrained in what concessions it can make in these negotiations both by the need to for support from other developing country governments and by a domestic constituency which is highly reliant on agricultural protection. If the Doha Round ends without a substantial new agreement, it would in a way be a negative victory for developing countries, since they would at least have avoided accepting another bad deal. It would also, however, discontinue a forum in which India was in a very visible fashion able to exert its claim as a developing country leader and negotiating equal of developed countries. If the Doha Round does end in a substantial agreement, India may be seen as a champion of the developing world or a sell-out depending on the substance of the agreement.

Appendix: Sample Interview Instrument

The following list of interview questions was used during an interview with a policy expert from a think tank called Focus on the Global South. Similar instruments were used during the other interviews, with of course "FGS" replaced by the name of their organization. As these interviews were semi-structured, questions may have been asked that were not on the formal list, that occurred to me in the course of the interview.

Interview Context

1) Please describe your role at FGS.

2) What areas of your field do you specialize in?

3) Do you identify with any school of thought, intellectual tradition, or theoretical framework within your field?

4) Schools?

5) Jobs? (private sector, government?)

6) What media do you consult to keep up events and developments pertaining to your work? (This can include databases, journals, newspapers, websites, etc.)

FGS

1) Please describe the role of FGS in society.

2) How important are WTO and agricultural trade policy within the entire range of FGS research?

3) What are its main activities? (such as: research, advocacy, government consultation, private consultation, etc)

4) What other groups or institutions does FGS partner with?

- government?
- business?
- academia?
- civil society organizations?
- international bodies?
- others?

5) How is FGS funded? (*is it mostly international?)*

6) How does FGS disseminate its findings?

7) How does FGS compare to other institutions in India doing similar work?

8) Can you provide some examples of FGS influencing government policy?

9) How does FGS get information from/ about stakeholders in its policy areas? (i.e., meetings, surveys, statistics, etc)

10) How does FGS India relate to FGS in the US and other countries?

FGS Personnel

1) What fields are most represented among FGS researchers? (economics, law, political science, etc)

2) To what extent have FGS workers also-

    - worked in the private sector?
    - worked in academia?
    - worked in government?
    - worked in International bodies or NGOs?

Agriculture

1) If you were to divide up stakeholders in India's agricultural economy into groups based on differing interests, what dimensions would be the most important? (i.e. small-vs-large farms, producers-vs-consumers, regional interests, crop specific interests, primary producers/ processors/ traders) [adapt #4 to this answer]

2) in general, what has been the impact of liberalization in general and WTO agreements in particular on the agricultural economy of India?

3) To date, has trade policy had much impact of issues of hunger and poverty among farmers in India?

4) (If so…) How has it affected specific groups within India's agricultural economy?

- large farms?
- small farms?
- different regions?
- different crops?
- auxiliary industries? (i.e., cargo, intermediate traders, input providers, food processing)

5) What should India do in the next several years with regard to agriculture and what is it likely to do?

Impact of WTO Agreements

1) In your opinion, has the net impact of the WTO *to date* been a net benefit or a net cost to –

- India?
- the developing world in general?

- the developed world in general?

2) Can you describe specific effects WTO regulations have had on Indian agriculture, *including issues of food security and livelihood security*?

3) What specific events or statistical indicators are most revealing of these impacts?

4) *Did India's WTO commitments cause it to do anything it would not have done anyway under its own liberalization programs?*

5) How important are the outcomes of current and future WTO negotiations to India?

India 's WTO Strategies

1) What do you see as the Indian government's current negotiating strategy in the WTO?

2) *Do you have any criticism of this strategy*?

3) What are the roles of alliances like the G20, G33, etc, in India's WTO strategies?

4) In principle, would India sacrifice some of its own interests in WTO negotiations if it contributed to the welfare of other developing countries?

5) How have India's WTO strategies changed since 1995?

Stakeholder Groups

1) What groups in Indian society (including, but limited to farmers), if any, have been most impacted by the WTO to date?

2) What stakeholders in India society have the most interest in the outcome of future WTO negotiations? (and to what extent are they aware of it?)

3) Which stakeholders tend to have the most influence over India's WTO policies and which have the least?

4) How well informed is the Indian public about WTO policy issues?

5) Do many citizens take WTO issues into consideration when voting or undertaking other political activity?

6) How would you describe the channels through which the desires of individual Indian citizens are transmitted to the decision-making bodies of the WTO?

Power in WTO

1) What are the advantages and disadvantages of developing countries in WTO negotiations?

2) of India in particular?

3) What are the advantages and disadvantages of developed countries in WTO negotiations?

4) Has the balance of bargaining power between developed and developing countries in the WTO changed since 1995?

5) Do you believe WTO institutions have any existence apart from the governments that make it up? (i.e. does it have any autonomous sovereignty apart from the collective sovereignty of its member states)

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Vita

Christopher L. Blackden

Education

Current Doctoral Candidate, Geography
University of Kentucky
Dissertation: "Transnational Policy Articulations: India, Agriculture, and the WTO"
PhD expected 2013

2005 MA, Geography
University of Kentucky
Thesis: "Cotton Nation: Scale, Sovereignty, and the WTO"

2003 Double BA, Geography/ Anthropology and Economics
Minor in Biological Science
University of Southern Maine

Awards

2008 "Doctoral Dissertation Research: Transnational Policy Articulations: India, Agriculture, and the WTO." National Science Foundation Award #0802518.

2005-2006 G. Etzel Pearcy Fellowship in Geopolitics, Geography Department, University of Kentucky

2004 Daniel R. Reedy Quality Achievement Award, the Graduate School, University of Kentucky

2003-2004 Academic Fellowship, the Graduate School, University of Kentucky

2003 Daniel R. Reedy Quality Achievement Award, the Graduate School, University of Kentucky

2001 Frank Hodges Geography Excellence Award, Department of Geography/ Anthropology, University of Southern Maine

Professional Experience

2012 Research Associate
Kentucky Transportation Center
University of Kentucky

2012 Teaching Assistant (discussion section leader)
University of Kentucky
Geo 163: Global Conflicts

2011 Teaching Assistant (discussion section leader)
University of Kentucky

	Geo 160: Lands and Peoples of the Non-Western World
2009- 2011	Part-time Instructor (2 Winter Intersessions) University of Kentucky Geo 160: Lands and Peoples of the Non-Western World
2010	GIS Specialist Appalachian Center University of Kentucky
2009	Research Assistant/ GIS Consultant, Lexington Community Food Assessment University of Kentucky
2009	Teaching Assistant (full class responsibility) Geo 160: Lands and Peoples of the Non-Western World University of Kentucky
2008	GIS Specialist Kentucky Parks Department
2008	Teaching Assistant (full class responsibility) Geo 365: GIS Fundamentals University of Kentucky
2006	RA/ GIS Lab Manager University of Kentucky
2004- 2007	Teaching Assistant (TA helper) Geo 130: Intro Physical Geog, Geo 160: Lands and Peoples of the Non-Western World, Geo 300: Research Meth, Geo 309: Intro GIS, Geo 409: GIS Fundamentals University of Kentucky
2003	Teaching Assistant, Political Economy (Eco 303) University of Southern Maine
2002	Teaching Assistant, Intro to GIS (Geo 199) University of Southern Maine
2000 – 2003	GIS lab proctor/ tutor University of Southern Maine
2002	GIS Consultant Greater Portland Council of Governments
2001	Intern (GIS, web programming) Greater Portland Council of Governments

Publications

Blackden, Chris. 2009. “Prelude to Cancun: India's trade policy reviews under the World Trade Organization” in Anshu (ed.), Food Security in India: Challenges of 21st Century. Patna, India: Kalakriti Offset.

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Conference Presentations

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“Prelude To Cancun: India’s 2002 Trade Policy Review before the World Trade Organization.” National Workshop on Food Security In India – Problems And Prospects, Delhi, India. Nov, 2008.

“Sovereignty without Borders, Violence without Arms: India, Agriculture, and the WTO.” American Associations of Geographers (AAG), Boston, Massachusetts. Apr, 2008.

“ ‘The Decider’ or Sovereignty without Borders.” Critical Geography Conference, Lexington, KY. Oct, 2007.

“Metasovereign.” American Associations of Geographers (AAG), San Francisco, Ca. Apr, 2007

“Modes of Power in the WTO.” Critical Geography Conference, Columbus, Ohio. Oct, 2006

“Embodying Abstraction: the Sovereign in All of Us.” Seventh Annual International Social Theory Consortium Conference, Roanoke, Virginia. May 2006

“The WTO as a ‘Quasi-State’.” American Associations of Geographers (AAG), Chicago, Il. Mar, 2006