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Developing countries coalition evolution in the WTO: Causes and consequences

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Abstract

Since the end of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations in 1994 and the subsequent formation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in the following year (1995), there has been a proliferation of coalition formations within the WTO especially by developing countries. Each coalition seeking to effect a particular change in the international trade regime, whether be structural, organizational, governance or the equitable share of costs and benefits etc. This research report seeks to unpack the types of coalitions formed and assess the rationale behind their formation. A comparison of coalition's pre and post 1995 will be made to get a glimpse of what distinguishes new coalitions from their predecessor. Amongst other things the impact or lack thereof which these coalitions has had on the structure, procedures, decision making and rules of the WTO, would also be evaluated to reflect on their success and weaknesses in trade negotiations. The Dependency theory of international relations together with the Transformational Leadership Approach drawn from the public administration school of thought would be used to explain the poor success of these coalitions. And account for reasons why most of them have recorded minimal success in their endeavours of creating an international trade regime with a more human face. The emergence of rising powers (e.g. countries like China, India, Brazil and to a lesser extent South Africa) together with the leadership roles which these countries provide in coalition building would be explored in an attempt to explain how these new actors or powers in international relations have the ability to mitigate on the weakness that crippled coalitions and ensure that developing countries forge strong coalitions capable of realizing their intended goals within the WTO moving forward.

Key words: GATT, WTO, Developing Countries, Coalitions, Evolution, Negotiations, Rising or Middle Powers, IBSA, BRIC'S and World Trade