
9 Canada's Adventures in Clubland: Trade Clubs and Political Influence

ROBERT WOLFE

Unlike Groucho Marx, Canadians want to belong to any club that will have us as a member, and that turns out to be quite a few international clubs. It is axiomatic that a central objective of Canadian foreign policy is to *participate* in making decisions that affect the country directly, while having *influence* on decisions that affect the evolving structure of global governance. The political practice of multilateralism, however, is not an open-ended Athenian forum where every state can speak freely, expecting its views to be given serious consideration by all others. In the messy reality of global governance, Canada can only play a role by aggregating its efforts with other countries. The notion of “clubs” is one way to think about how that process works. It is an especially useful idea when studying the World Trade Organization (WTO), where the current Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations is characterized by a bewildering array of clubs with banal and whimsical names, from the G-4 through the Dirty Dozen and the Friends of Fish to the G-90. Canada is a great joiner, but many observers now wonder whether Canada is still a member of the best clubs in WTO “clubland.”

It is common to see international organizations in themselves as “clubs,” meaning places where insiders (certain states and selected officials of those states) know the rules, and outsiders (citizens, other states) are not welcome (Keohane and Nye 2001). Regional agreements can also be seen as clubs (Padoan 1997), and particular treaties can be seen as providing “club goods,” in the sense of excludable goods available only to members of those clubs. Sometimes the term will be applied to a loosely structured body, like the Paris Club of creditor states,

or to a set of countries with no structure at all, as in referring to the states possessing nuclear weapons as the nuclear club. There was a time when the WTO's predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), could be seen as an exclusive club: only selected countries could be Contracting Parties, and only selected officials could penetrate its inner mysteries. The WTO, however, is no longer an exclusive club and Membership automatically implies participation in every formal WTO body.¹

The Doha negotiations take place in Negotiating Groups for Agriculture, Services, Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA), Rules, Trade Facilitation, Environment and Trade-related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), all under the supervision of the Trade Negotiations Committee. Only the largest WTO Members can monitor and participate in all the associated meetings in addition to the regular work in the roughly five dozen WTO bodies. The US does so easily. The 27 member states of the European Union (EU) are represented by the European Commission. Perhaps less than half a dozen more Members have the capacity to participate actively across the board, notably Canada and Japan. Other leading developed and developing countries participate more actively in some areas than others. And all countries must find ways to aggregate their efforts with others in clubs.

CLUBS IN THE WTO

I define a "club" as a group of nations united or associated for a particular purpose, a definition that purposely evokes a looser form of association than the common tendency to see informal groups of states working within international organizations as "coalitions" (Odell 2006b). These clubs are voluntary – no Member of the WTO has to join a club, nor must a given club accept the participation of any Member.

Clubs provide their members with an opportunity to learn about issues with like-minded colleagues; to coordinate positions for WTO meetings, whether plenary or restricted groups; to span the gaps between opposing clubs in Bridge clubs; and to debrief on past meetings. Clubs often speak as a group, allowing members to expand support for each other's preferred issues. Clubs also engage in analytic burden-sharing in the preparation of common proposals. The most-structured clubs require high-level recognition in capitals, especially for subordinating national strategy to joint negotiating positions; they have formal coordination/decision-making procedures; sometimes meet at ministerial level; and sometimes have sophisticated analytical support. The least-organized are loose consultative mechanisms at the technical

or delegate level, often requiring authority from capitals, but they matter in the larger dynamics of building consensus and in solving substantive problems.

The many WTO clubs show differing patterns of membership because countries do not have a single preference schedule that can readily be aligned with those of other countries across all issues. In agriculture, for example, Canada's allies on issues affecting eastern dairy farmers are not the same as its otherwise closer allies on issues affecting western grain farmers. Clubs vary, therefore, on the extent to which members share a common agenda. In the Cairns Group, Canada and Australia agree on ending export subsidies but disagree on whether "sensitive products" (usually understood to include sugar, dairy and rice) should be exempted from liberalization obligations. Similar tensions are found in the G-20, where India and Brazil do not agree on the extent to which some "special products" (ones important for food security or rural development) should be exempt from new obligations. That club formed to advance their agriculture objectives – their divergent interests on industrial goods mean that in that area of the negotiations, only a rump is able to work together as the NAMA-II. In services, Canada is associated with "collective requests" on many issues, but it is a target of other requests. Offensive and defensive concerns form a complex pattern for most Members.

Clubs in the WTO also differ on their procedural characteristics, as do similar groups in the International Monetary Fund (Woods and Lombardi 2006). Some clubs will always be chaired by one Member but some will have a rotating chair. The influence of some clubs depends more on the institutional power discussed below than on its members share in world trade. Finally the members of clubs will differ in their diplomatic and analytic capacity: some delegations have more, and better, resources in Geneva and in capitals than others, which affects the effectiveness and influence of their clubs.

The clubs that seem such an important part of the institutional design of the Doha round have roots in earlier GATT rounds, indeed in long established multilateral practices going back to the League of Nations. The establishment of groups was part of the United Nations (UN) from the beginning and now voting blocs and clubs of all sorts are common (Smith 2006, 50, 77ff). Unlike the UN system, electoral clubs as such do not play a role in the WTO, although some regional clubs do work together occasionally on political issues and in the process of reaching consensus on appointing the chairpersons of WTO bodies. Three sorts of clubs are relevant for WTO negotiations. Clubs based on a broad *common characteristic* (e.g. region or level of development) can influence

Table 9.1
GATT Clubs

Kennedy Round 1960s
US domination of small organization
Tokyo Round 1970s
EC-12, US domination
Quad emerges de facto (Canada)
G-77 focused on UNCTAD and NIEO not GATT
Pre-Uruguay Round
Annecy (US, EC, Canada, Japan, Switzerland)
Uruguay Round 1986–94
EC-15, US prominence
Quad (Canada)
Cairns Group (Canada)
Net Food Importers Group
de la Paix group (Canada)
Invisibles group (Canada)
G10 (Brazil, India in blocking role)
Group of 12 on Antidumping (failed bridge club)
Subsidies (US, EC, Canada)

many issues, including the round as a whole, but only weakly. Clubs based on a *common objective* (e.g. agricultural trade) can have a great deal of influence, but on a limited range of issues. *Bridge clubs* can be essential for breaking deadlocks, or managing negotiations, often by building bridges between opposed positions. In the Law of the Sea negotiations in the 1970s, they were called “compromise groups” (Buzan 1980). In the UN such clubs are called “contact groups,” “negotiating groupings” (Smith 2006, 73–4) or “Friends of the chair” when they are formed to help the Secretary General in his efforts to resolve a specific conflict (Prantl and Krasno 2004). As will be seen in Table 9.2, they are also known under different names in the WTO.

I have not seen mention of clubs in histories of the first 15 years of the GATT, perhaps because the small number of Contracting Parties was sufficiently like-minded not to need the device. Inevitably the emergence of clubs in the GATT was a story about the slow pace of agricultural reform, and conflict between Europe and the US.

Agriculture was effectively exempted from the GATT in the 1950s, and little progress was made in the Kennedy Round of the 1960s, whose main purpose had been to assimilate the then new European

Economic Community's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to the rules of the system – an objective that was not met. Some major deals in that round began life in small meetings of the most significant participants – the so-called “bridge club” of the US, the European Community (EC, then with only six member states), the United Kingdom, Japan and Canada (Winham 1986, 65). I take my term for groups formed to break deadlocks from this early example. The US hoped that the Tokyo Round of the 1970s would achieve what the Kennedy Round did not, but the EC argued that agriculture should be negotiated separately from industrial products; the US, seeking maximum liberalization, insisted on treating agriculture like any other sector (Winham 1986, 95). The group that became known as the Quad (for Quadrilateral Group of Trade Ministers: US, EU, Japan, Canada) after the 1981 Ottawa G-7 Summit had already made a contribution to bridging differences in the closing stages of the Tokyo Round.

As in the Tokyo Round, the US was the main proponent of liberalization in the Uruguay Round, but this time it was joined by the newly formed Cairns Group. A group of developing countries with preferential access to EC markets were concerned that they would lose market access and a group of mostly African countries was concerned that liberalization would increase world prices of key imported food products (Croome 1995, 113). The EC and US retained their prominence in the negotiations, but a growing role was played by clubs, like the Quad, the Cairns Group, the de la Paix group (a north/south group that pushed for a broadly based agenda), the G-10 (with Brazil and India in a blocking role) and the Invisibles group, a little-known Bridge club.

In the Doha Round, launched in 2001, clubs have proliferated. Part of the explanation is based on institutional design factors – the many developing country Members have discovered that clubs are essential in an organization that never takes votes (the consensus rule) and where nothing is agreed until everything is agreed (the Single Undertaking). The clubs are influenced by the national characteristics of their members (Costantini et al. 2007), but they are also influenced by other clubs – the many new clubs formed around the time of the Cancún ministerial in 2003 had learned from the practices of the Cairns group, formed nearly two decades before. The list in Table 9.2 shows the common characteristic, common objective and Bridge clubs as they existed in early 2007. Figure 9.1, originally prepared by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development and modified by the WTO secretariat, shows the overlapping membership of the agriculture clubs. Some domains might have fewer clubs because in the current negotiations the chair holds most meetings in informal plenary; it may also be that clubs proliferate as more WTO Members take a more intense interest in a

Table 9.2
WTO Clubland in Early-2007

Common characteristic clubs

G-90†
ACP†
African Group†
LDCs†
ASEAN†
CARICOM†
Small and Vulnerable Economies (SVEs)
Recently Acceded Members (RAMs)
Small Vulnerable Coastal States (SVCS)

Common purpose clubs

Agriculture

OFFENSIVE COALITIONS
Cotton-4†
Tropical and Alternative Products Group
Cairns Group (NS)†
G-20 (s/s)†
DEFENSIVE COALITIONS
G-10†
G-33†
RAMs, SVEs

Non-agricultural Market Access (NAMA)

NAMA 11†
Friends of MFN
Friends of Ambition in NAMA
Hotel d'Angleterre
RAMs, SVEs

Rules

SCVS
Friends of Fish
Friends of Antidumping Negotiations (FANs)

TRIPS

African Group
"Disclosure" group of developing countries
Friends of Geographical Indications
Friends Against Extension of Geographical Indications

Services

G-25
ASEAN-1 (-Singapore)
African Group, ACP, LDCs, SVEs

Table 9.2
WTO Clubland in Early-2007 (Continued)

Real Good Friends of GATS/Friends of Friends*
Friends of ... (plurilateral expert) groups: **Audiovisual, legal; Architectural/Engineering/Integrated Engineering***; **Computer and related services**; Postal/Courier including express delivery; **Telecommunications; Construction and Related Engineering**; distribution; education; **Environmental service; Financial services***; **Maritime transport**; Air transport; logistics; energy; Services related to Agriculture, Cross-border services (Mode 1/2), Mode 3, Mode 4, MFN exemptions

Trade Facilitation
 Core Group/W142 group
 Colorado Group/W137 group

Environment
Friends of environmental goods
 Friends of the environment and sustainable development

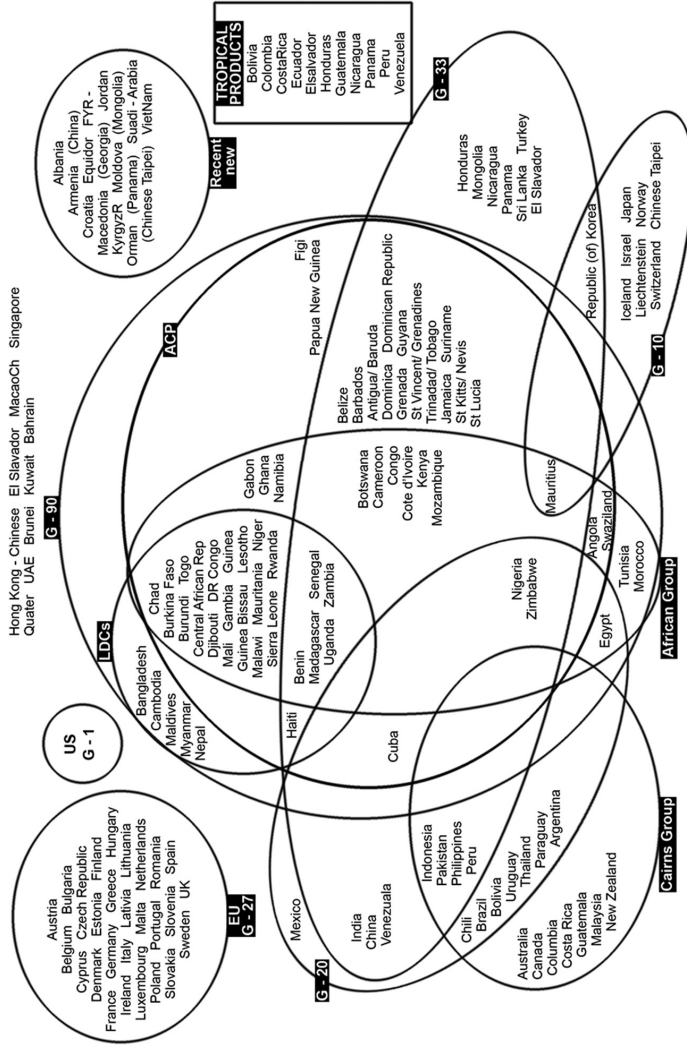
Textiles
 International Textiles and Clothing Bureau (ITCB)

Bridge clubs
 AGRICULTURE AND NAMA (principal antagonists):
 G-4 (US EU Brazil, India)†
 G-6 (add Australia, Japan)†
 SERVICES
Enchilada Group
 GENERAL (deadlock-breaking)
Oslo or Non-G-6
Quad
Dirty Dozen (Quad plus)
 “senior officials” (25–30)
Mini-ministerials† (25–30)

Notes:

1. Canada belongs to groups in **bold**, and is the coordinator of * starred groups. † indicates groups that have met at ministerial level during the Doha Round.
2. For a glossary of agriculture groups, see (WTO 2006). The list in this document is based both on self-identified groups and on sets of Members that have submitted joint proposals at various stages of the negotiations. The Five Interested Parties (FIPs) has ceased meeting in that form, as has, therefore, the FIPs Plus. The agriculture Quint does not seem to have met for some time.
3. The Enchilada Group incorporates Members who once met as the Core Group and then the G-15.
4. Certain regional (common characteristic) groups apparently no longer actively coordinate in WTO except occasionally on electoral or political issues, such as observer status: ALADI, Andean Group, Arab Group, APEC, CEFTA, GRULAC, Islamic Group, Mercosur, OECS, SADC, SAPTA, SELA.
5. The once-prominent Like-Minded Group (LMG) has not been active for many years. The status of the “informal group of developing countries” is not clear.

Figure 9.1
Membership in Agricultural Clubs



Source: International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development and WTO Secretariat

particular domain. The services clubs are a special case. The more active members have always organized themselves in “Friends of” groups. These groups of experts do not include the WTO secretariat, and decide for themselves who can come to meetings. The list in Table 9.2 is based on the “collective requests” submitted in early 2006 under the plurilateral approach introduced in paragraph 7 of Annex C of the Hong Kong declaration (World Trade Organization 2005).

DECISION-MAKING AND CRITICAL MASS

At most 40 delegations are significant players in the negotiations, a reality mentioned again and again by senior members of the secretariat and by ambassadors, including from developing countries.² Agriculture is the area followed most closely, but at most 15 delegations really play a significant part (and the principal ideas come from less than 10). And yet the reality of the WTO is that consensus and the Single Undertaking require every member to understand and feel engaged in the negotiations. Reaching a consensus with 150 Members is not easy. The institutional design issue becomes structuring a process where the key players can get on with it, without losing touch with the interests of all the rest, and doing it in a way that builds confidence in the process and the results. Clubs are part of the solution.

The systemic public good of an open liberal multilateral trading system does not require collective supply by all 150 Members of the WTO, as long as the non-discrimination norms are respected. If the largest markets are open, the system will be open. And the necessary intellectual work of negotiating new rules need not involve all Members all the time. But how many Members are needed to provide systemic “critical mass”? The European Union (or EU, now with 27 member states) and the US are necessary but not sufficient for a deal. The idea of critical mass implies that the relevant process is of a sufficient size to be self-sustaining, whether it is a nuclear reaction or the wide diffusion of a social norm. Many applications in social science derive from Mancur Olson’s work on the provision of collective goods. Whereas Olson’s work is pessimistic on the possibility of cooperation, other scholars explore the circumstances under which a group of sufficient size can be created to supply public goods (Oliver and Marwell 2001).

Critical mass with respect to the WTO implies first that markets that represent a significant share of global production and consumption should help to supply the systemic public good, a form of *material power*. The public good of new rules also depends on acceptance by participants in the trading system that the rules themselves are appropriate and legitimate, which suggests that critical mass must have an-

other dimension. The coercive power of the largest markets is limited now both by the emergence of other significant markets and by equally powerful symbolic and normative claims based on justice for developing countries, in general but especially for the poorest. In the Tokyo Round, developing countries could opt out of any aspect of the bargain, and their views could be ignored. But the WTO is now a Single Undertaking: once the shape of the package is agreed upon, final decisions are made on the package as a whole, not on the individual elements. Each participant must accept all the new obligations. That decision is inevitably made by consensus (meaning that nobody present objects). These two principles give every Member the ability to slow the process down, a form of *institutional power*, and developing countries are increasingly aware of that power in the WTO. They are also increasingly aware of the need to participate, because they will not be able to opt out of any of the new obligations, which has put stress on the ability of the WTO process to remain effective while becoming more inclusive and transparent.

Critical mass in the WTO, therefore, has two dimensions. When all issues are lumped together, and any Member can block consensus, institutional power must be joined to compulsory power to reach a successful outcome in negotiations. A bargain must satisfy those Members whose market weight is sufficient to give effect to the deal, but it must also satisfy those Members whose acquiescence is sufficient to give the deal legitimacy. Most matters will be settled informally because consensus forces actors to find a compromise when a vote is not available as a means to decide a controversy.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the real work is done in informal meetings of the various negotiating groups, in restricted meetings organized by the chair, or in bilateral sessions. Members talk at the Ministerial Conference every two years, in regular committees that meet two or three times a year and in the Negotiating Groups that meet every four-six weeks. They talk in hundreds of formal on-the-record meetings every year, and they talk in many hundreds more informal meetings, including “mini-ministerials” (Wolfe 2004). No organization with 150 Members can find consensus on sensitive matters like agricultural reform if all discussions must be held in public, in large groups, with written records. All Members must be in the room when the deal is done, but assembling the requisite critical mass requires smaller meetings.

WTO insiders understand the process as a series of nested “concentric circles.” In the outer ring are official WTO meetings (mandated by the treaty or the rules of procedure); these plenary meetings are held only for the record. In the next circle are informal plenary meetings of a regular body, under its regular chair, held mostly for transparency

purposes. The real work is done when the chair meets with a limited number of technical experts, or when s/he invites a small group of key players to explore selected issues. When these discussions reach an impasse, the traditional GATT response to negotiating difficulties now carried over to the WTO has been meetings of a restricted group of Members, usually known by the colour of the director-general's boardroom. The Green Room is therefore a real place, but the term also refers to a specific type of meeting, whether of ambassadors in Geneva or ministers at the biennial Ministerial Conference. The original Green Room practice reflected three negotiating realities: informality is vital; the largest Members, especially the US and the EU, must always be in the room; and other interested parties should be engaged in the search for consensus. Part of what the many clubs of Table 9.2 do is to create a claim that one of their number should represent them in the Green Room. Up to 30 Members often participate in Green Room meetings, and they are sometimes represented by two or more ministers or officials. While it is a large group for a negotiation, all key players plus all groups must be represented if it is to be *inclusive* and therefore legitimate. The members of the original Quad are always represented along with other leading traders, representatives of clubs, and coordinators of the regional groups. The process must also be *transparent* to other Members of the WTO. Representatives in the room must fairly articulate the views of their club, and must expeditiously and comprehensively report on the deliberations. Any results must also be fairly presented by the chairperson when s/he reports on the state of negotiations in plenary meetings, or when s/he drafts documents designed to attract consensus.

THE VALUE OF BRIDGE CLUBS

Bridge clubs are intended to play a coordinating role, but they are located outside the WTO concentric circles, since they are not chaired by the chairperson of the regular body, and the secretariat is often not invited. The utility of all restricted Bridge clubs was questioned after the Doha negotiations were "suspended" in July 2006. A representative Green Room or mini-ministerial may be too large to provide leadership, and the old Quad will never return, but some new grouping may be needed to conclude the round. Such a new grouping may need to change either the *level* of participation or the *Members* involved.

The first approach is to try to bump thorny issues up to heads of government. Former Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin was convinced that an informal meeting of leaders could make a major difference on issues like agricultural trade reform (Martin 2004). He received little

support for the idea. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva angled for months in 2005–6 to have a summit devoted solely to breaking the Doha logjam, but also received little support. In the event, on the margins of the St. Petersburg summit in 2006, the G8 had a meeting with their five regular interlocutors (Brazil, India, China, Mexico and South Africa) but managed only to tell their trade ministers to get the job done. The ministers then failed. At the time of writing, there was little prospect that the similar injunction delivered at the 2007 meeting would be any more useful. The effort to engage leaders is based on what people think they remember about the G-7 Summit contributions to ending the Tokyo Round in 1978 and the Uruguay Round in 1993. In both cases, however, leaders did little more than ask the Quad trade ministers to meet in advance in order to present a report at the summit. Leaders can force coordination within their own government if the lack of such coordination is the obstacle to agreement, but leaders could not solve the agriculture problem from the top.

If changing the level does not help, changing the countries might. Part of the effort to re-start the round after the failed Cancún ministerial in 2003 was a process involving the principal antagonists on agriculture: the US and the EU, who are opposed to each other; and Brazil and India who are opposed both to each other and to the US and the EU. These four tried to sort things out as a “new Quad,” (or G-4) and failed. In 2004, they included Australia, representing the Cairns Group, in what became known as the “five interested parties,” or FIPs. They next included Japan, representing the G-10 (agricultural importers), in what became known as the G-6 – it met frequently, without success. The group did not meet at the ministerial or senior official level for many months after its spectacular failure to resolve the modalities conundrum in the summer of 2006. In early 2007, the G-4 countries are again engaged in quiet efforts to find a compromise, so far with no more success – and their efforts are not seen as legitimate even by the developing countries Brazil and India purport to represent because the process is not transparent and multilateral.

The G-6 failed as a Bridge club in 2006 because they could not advance a systemic interest. The club contains the principal antagonists, but they are all publicly committed to their positions which make compromises difficult. The old Quad was more effective because one participant, Canada, was not a principal antagonist. Having listened to all the others, Canada was able to put possible compromises forward quietly among senior officials in a way that could advance the negotiations. Some negotiators think it is time, therefore, to change countries as well as the level at which Members are represented.

Two Uruguay Round events are precedents for changing the countries. The first is the “café au lait” process led by Switzerland and Columbia in 1986. Known as the de la Paix group after the hotel where they first met, this group advanced a compromise proposal on the arrangements and subjects for the Uruguay Round that was successful in part because the proponents shared not specific negotiating objectives but a commitment to the importance of the Round itself. The group was reconstituted in June 1988 with an informal proposal by seven countries (Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Hungary, Korea, New Zealand and Switzerland) that helped energize the process (Croome 1995). Now a group of six WTO Members (Canada, Chile, Indonesia, Kenya, New Zealand and Norway) are trying something similar. Senior officials (not ministers) met in Oslo in October 2006 to discuss key issues blocking progress in the negotiations. None of the six belonged to the G-6, but they did represent many of the major clubs, north and south. Participants in the “non-G-6” or Oslo group have tried not to attract attention to themselves with their subsequent meetings on all aspects of the round, making it too early to assess the eventual contribution this Bridge club might make.

WHERE IS CANADA IN WTO CLUBLAND?

This picture of power and influence in the WTO is remarkably complex. Some old hands who compare it to the simpler days of the Tokyo and Uruguay Rounds think the Canadian role is diminished. It should be apparent from Table 9.2, however, that the only current club to which Canada might once have expected to belong is the G-4. Is Canada’s absence significant?

The current minority parliament both keeps the Canadian minister of international trade closer to home than some of his counterparts, and limits Canadian negotiators’ public room to manoeuvre, but it is frequently said both in Geneva and in Ottawa that it is their quixotic support for supply management that has marginalized Canadian ministers. Politicians are tied in knots by the farm lobbies, as in November 2005 when the House of Commons after a full day of debate on agricultural trade policy gave unanimous approval to a motion instructing negotiators at the WTO’s Hong Kong ministerial to seek increased market access abroad for agricultural exports while offering none at home in order to protect the supply management system (Canada 2005, 9960, 10017).³

All Canada’s trading partners understand why in a minority parliament ministers will not risk even whispering that the likely Doha

outcomes will be manageable for Canadian farmers, even if some adjustment will be needed (Gifford 2005). But that limits Canadian ability to build bridges on “sensitive products,” as the trade minister admitted to a House of Commons committee earlier this year (Wilson 2007). As one Geneva ambassador told me privately, “Canadian ministers are not in the game.” If material power were the whole story, this claim would be silly, but anything that affects a negotiator’s credibility can affect other forms of power. It was awkward in April 2007 when Canada could join its Cairns Group colleagues in submitting a non-paper on tropical and alternative products, but could not sign on to the submission on sensitive products. It is hard to exert influence in favour of compromise if others know that you have promised your own domestic interests that you yourself will not compromise. But the main reason that Canada is not in the G-4 is because it is not a principal antagonist; we are not needed for a solution to the central blockage. On agriculture, other members only want us to reduce the restrictiveness of supply management and to end the export monopoly of the Wheat Board. Whatever the merits of those actions, they would make a trivial contribution to the overall Doha outcome. Similarly on trade in goods, Canada does not bring a lot of new trade to the table in market access negotiations because the country has relatively low levels of remaining protection as a result of NAFTA and the Uruguay Round.

It is neither surprising nor especially significant, therefore, that Canada is not in the G-4. It might become significant if the G-4 proves able to play a broader role, but so far it has not even been able to unblock the central obstacles to the round. Of more importance, Canada is still a valued player in many clubs, as shown in Table 9.2. Canada’s well-respected ambassador in Geneva chairs the sensitive NAMA negotiations. He is supported by a staff of eleven professionals in Geneva, one of whom, for example coordinates the “Friends of Friends” club in services which manages the “collective requests” process. With its substantial number of trade policy professionals in Ottawa, Canada has been able, as the secretariat observed, to make contributions or proposals in a wide range of areas, including trade facilitation, agriculture, market access for non-agricultural goods, services, subsidies, anti-dumping and countervailing duties and intellectual property – a total of 70 documents in the trade negotiations series (“TN”) in the WTO Documents Online database between January 2003 and October 2006 (World Trade Organization 2007, para 37).⁴ Few Members have made as substantial an analytic contribution to the negotiations. Canada is represented at all levels of the concentric circles in every area of the negotiations, from Green Room-type meetings (20–40 delegations) of ambassadors in Geneva and ministers at the Ministerial Conferences,

through numerous mini-ministerials of trade and agriculture ministers to things like the Fireside Chats held by the chair of the agriculture negotiations, Enchilada talks held by the services chair, and of course the NAMA caucus, which the Canadian ambassador chairs. With respect to Bridge clubs, Canada has played a leading role in the Oslo group. The old Quad that met regularly from the end of the Tokyo Round in the 1970s through the lengthy Uruguay Round negotiations and to the early days of the WTO has not met at ministerial level since 1999. But it still meets informally among Geneva delegates, where Canada is useful as an intermediary and for its analytic capacity.

The jury is still out on whether clubs have helped or hindered the Doha round, which was still struggling when this chapter was written, but what we know is that decisions in any social context are taken, or at least shaped, by small groups. Less than 10 participants may be most efficient for decision-making, but effectiveness and legitimacy in WTO often requires up to 30 Members in order to ensure that all perspectives are heard in the search for consensus. The list will differ by issue, but Canada is always present at that level in the concentric circles. However the round ends, and whatever form the next round takes, it is a safe assumption that decision-making will include some sort of Green Room-type meetings, and that clubs will be needed to ensure inclusive and transparent representation of all Members. Within the various domains of the WTO, it also seems probable that Members will find it easier to assemble the requisite critical mass by working together in clubs in an effort to manage the scale and complexity of the agenda. Finding a consensus on the management of a global trading system with 150 members with more set to join, is not going to get easier, but maintaining the Single Undertaking is vital. Canadians will continue to use clubs to advance the country's interests in this complex environment, playing a traditional analytic and bridge-building role.

NOTES

- 1 I capitalize Member when referring to the WTO, and not when referring to members of a club.
- 2 The WTO has 150 Members in May 2007. Counting the EU-27 as one, if 40 are more or less effective, that implies that roughly 80 Members are to varying degrees content to follow a lead set by others.
- 3 The opposition Bloc Québécois moved:
That, in the opinion of the House, the government should give its negotiators a mandate during the negotiations at the World Trade Organization so that, at the end of the current round of negotiations, Canada obtains results that

ensure that the supply management sectors are subject to no reduction in over-quota tariffs and no increase in tariff quotas, so that these sectors can continue to provide producers with a fair and equitable income (Canada 2005, 1010).

The Conservatives (then in opposition in a minority parliament) moved:

That the motion be amended by replacing all the words after “quotas” with “and also ensure an agreement that strengthens the market access of Canada’s agricultural exporters so that all sectors can continue to provide producers with a fair and equitable income”. (Canada 2005, 1530)

- 4 When less formal JOB documents are added, the number more than doubles – see WTO (2007b, Annex 1).

REFERENCES

- Buzan, Barry. 1980. “‘United We Stand ...’: Informal Negotiating Groups at UNCLOS III.” *Marine Policy* 4 (3):183–204.
- Canada. 2005. “Opposition Motion: World Trade Organization Negotiations.” *House of Commons Debates*. Official Report. 38th Parliament, 1st Session. no. 155, 22 November. House of Commons. Available at: <<http://canadaonline.about.com>>
- Costantini, Valeria, Riccardo Crescenzi, Fabrizio De Filippis and Luca Salvatici. 2007. “Bargaining Coalitions in the WTO Agricultural Negotiations.” *The World Economy* 30, no. 5: 863–91.
- Croome, John. 1995. *Reshaping the World Trading System: A History of the Uruguay Round*. Geneva: World Trade Organization.
- Gifford, Mike. 2005. *Can Canada’s Supply Managed Dairy Industry Survive the Doha Round?* Trade Policy Brief 2005–3, November. Ottawa: Canadian Agricultural Trade Policy Research Network. Available at: <<http://www.uoguelph.ca/~catprn/PDF/TPB-05-03.pdf>>
- Keohane, Robert O. and Joseph S. Nye, Jr. 2001. “The Club Model of Multilateral Cooperation and Problems of Democratic Legitimacy.” In *Efficiency, Equity, and Legitimacy: The Multilateral Trading System at the Millennium*, edited by Roger B. Porter, Pierre Sauvé, Arvind Subramanian and Americo Bevigilia Zampetti. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 264–94.
- Martin, Paul. 2004. Prime Minister Paul Martin Speaks at the World Economic Forum On “The Future of Global Interdependence,” Davos, Switzerland, 23 January. Privy Council Office. Available at: <http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Language=E&Page=archivemartin&Sub=speechesdiscours&Doc=speech_20040123_31_e.htm>
- Odell, John S. 2006a. “Introduction.” In *Negotiating Trade: Developing Countries in the WTO and NAFTA*, edited by John S. Odell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1–38.

- ed. 2006b. *Negotiating Trade: Developing Countries in the WTO and NAFTA*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Oliver, Pamela E, and Gerald Marwell. 2001. “Whatever Happened to Critical Mass Theory? A Retrospective and Assessment.” *Sociological Theory* 19, no. 3: 292–311.
- Padoan, Pier Carlo. 1997. “Regional Agreements as Clubs: The European Case.” In *The Political Economy of Regionalism*, edited by Edward D. Mansfield and Helen V. Milner. New York: Columbia University Press, 107–34.
- Prantl, Jochen, and Jean Krasno. 2004. “Informal Groups of Member States.” In *The United Nations: Confronting the Challenges of a Global Society*, edited by Jean E. Krasno. Boulder, CO and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 311–57.
- Smith, Courtney B. 2006. *Politics and Process at the United Nations: The Global Dance*. Boulder, CO and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Wilson, Barry. 2007. “Minister Maintains Stance on Supply Management.” *Western Producer*, 8 March.
- Winham, Gilbert R. 1986. *International Trade and the Tokyo Round Negotiation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Wolfe, Robert. 2004. “Informal Political Engagement in the WTO: Are Mini-Ministerials a Good Idea?” In *Trade Policy Research 2004*, edited by Dan Ciuriak and John M. Curtis. Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (International Trade), 27–90.
- Woods, Ngaire, and Domenico Lombardi. 2006. “Uneven Patterns of Governance: How Developing Countries Are Represented in the IMF.” *Review of International Political Economy* 13, no. 3: 480–515.
- World Trade Organization. 2005. *Doha Work Programme*. Ministerial Conference, Sixth Session. WT/MIN(05)/W/3/Rev.2, 18 December. Hong Kong: WTO.
- 2006. “Countries, Alliances and Proposals.” *Agriculture Negotiations: Backgrounder*. Paper delivered to the WTO. 27 November. Geneva, Switzerland: WTO. Available at: <http://www.wto.org/English/tratop_e/agric_e/negs_bkgrnd04_groups_e.htm>
- 2007. *Trade Policy Review Canada: Report by the Secretariat – CANADA*. WT/TPR/S/179, 14 February. Trade Policy Review Body, World Trade Organization. Available at: <www.wto.org/English/tratop_e/tp_r_e/s179-00_e.doc>