

Symbolic Power in the World Trade Organization

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For my parents, Mary Eagleton and David Pierce

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	x
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xi
1. Introduction	1
2. Power analysis and the WTO system	24
3. The symbolic face of power	49
4. The competing kings of cotton	84
5. The heretics in the house	120
6. Conclusion	155
<i>Appendices</i>	168
<i>Endnotes</i>	171
<i>Bibliography</i>	224
<i>Index</i>	253

List of figures

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 5.1 | FAO Food Price Index in real terms, 1961–2010. Reproduced with permission from Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, <i>The State of Food and Agriculture 2010–11</i> | 123 |
| 5.2 | Indices of commodity prices included in the FAO Food Price Index, 2000–2010. Reproduced with permission from Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, <i>The State of Food and Agriculture 2010–11</i> | 124 |
| 5.3 | Average final bound tariffs, applied tariffs, and tariff overhangs for 16 proxy special agricultural products in selected G33 countries. | 129 |

List of abbreviations

ACA	African Cotton Association
ACP	Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific countries/group
AGOA	Africa Growth and Opportunity Act
AMS	Aggregate measure of support
AoA	Agreement on Agriculture
AU	African Union
C4	Cotton Four (group of countries)
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CBI	Caribbean Basin Initiative
CCFF	Compensatory and Contingency Financing Facility
CFA	Communauté financière d'Afrique
CCF	Compensatory Financing Facility
CMA/CWA	West- and central-African ministers of agriculture
COMTRADE	Commodity Trade database
CSI	Coalition of Service Industries
DG	Director general
DSB	Dispute Settlement Body
EC	European Communities
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ENDA	Environment and Development Action in the Third World
EU	European Union
EWG	Environmental Working Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
G10	Group of 10 (Northern countries)
G20	Group of 20 (Southern countries)
G33	Group of 33 (Southern countries)
G77	Group of 77 (Southern countries)
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services

List of abbreviations

GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
HS	Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System
ICAC	International Cotton Advisory Committee
ICTSD	International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development
IF	Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least-Developed Countries
IFSL	International Financial Services London
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPE	International political economy
IR	International relations
ITO	International Trade Organization
LDCs	Least-developed countries
LMG	Like Minded Group
NCC	National Cotton Council
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
POs	Producer organizations
PSE	Producer subsidy equivalent
ROPFA	Le Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs de l’Afrique de l’Ouest
SDT	Special and differential treatment
SPs	Special products
SSG	Special Agricultural Safeguard
SSM	Special Safeguard Mechanism
STABEX	Système de Stabilisation des Recettes d’Exportation
TA	Technical assistance
TRIPS	Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
TRQ	Tariff rate quota
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
USDA	US Department of Agriculture
USTR	US Trade Representative
WCA	West and central Africa
WTO	World Trade Organization

1

Introduction

On the last night of the ministerial conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Doha, Qatar in 2001 the pressures were tremendous and the exchanges often fierce. Delegates from thirteen countries gathered in a small room to define the latest agenda of the global trading system. The director general (DG), as referee, had quietly informed all parties that only two representatives per country would be allowed in the room, but somehow the US delegation had five. Negotiation texts had been flying back and forth all day, covering a range of topics yet, in a kind of ‘act of magic’, the objections of many Southern countries did not appear to have been incorporated into the main text.¹ At key moments, phone calls were placed from Northern capitals to Southern capitals in an effort to build consensus. According to the most privileged actors, some Southern negotiators were behaving in a ‘recalcitrant’ manner. Their ‘unreasonable obstructions’, it was argued, would not be viewed in a favourable light, especially when considering preferential economic agreements and other political relations. Wisdom dictated that failure to sign a deal would inevitably send a ‘poor signal’ to those technicians working in ‘the market’, not to mention terrorists working in caves. Progressively, as the meeting dragged on until seven o’clock in the morning, the burden of proof shifted from those making new proposals to those not wanting them. Tensions were high, fatigue was setting in, and personal insults were registered. Outside, the other 130 countries that had come to the conference to defend their interests waited anxiously, unable to shape events. When the final text was revealed, many Southern countries were left with feelings of ‘deep disappointment and betrayal’.² The declaration was much worse than all previous drafts. Yet the conference was over.

These quotes and insights into the process are gleaned from interviews conducted with delegates from Southern countries who attended that Fourth Ministerial Conference. This declaration became known as the ‘Doha Development Agenda’. It has been commonly argued that its purpose was to ‘rebalance’ the multilateral trading system in order to serve the interests of Southern

Symbolic Power in the World Trade Organization

countries. When one tries to understand how this final meeting at Doha was conducted, including assessing who adjusted the agenda and why, it is clear that the role of power is important. Power is said to ‘matter’ in trading relations. The concept is integral to our efforts to explain how the structures of the WTO are conceived, how actions within them are enabled, and what distributional outcomes are achieved. Power is at work, according to the conventional definition, when one actor compels another to do something they would not have done otherwise. When the US team overrode the decision of DG Michael Moore to limit the number of negotiators or when the White House placed a phone call to Islamabad to secure Pakistan’s acquiescence, it is usual to say that power is being exercised.³ On reflection and through analysis, it can be argued that the most privileged WTO members draw upon a repertoire of methods in order to control other actors. For outsiders, however, these forms of power are not always directly observable. Some of these techniques may be viewed as ‘underhand’, ‘silent’, or ‘gestural’. Behind the Doha Declaration thus stands a whole other ‘declaration’ of power relations, and it is the purpose of this book to explore this undisclosed ‘declaration’ in an effort to shed light on how the process informed the outcome.

As many political analysts have argued, there is nothing secondary or self-evident about the concept of power. There remains considerable disagreement among scholars over its definition and meaning, and little indication that an ‘endpoint’ or, at least, a partial resolution can be found. More than one scholar, for instance, will have felt Michel Foucault’s exasperation: ‘I understand who gains and who loses, it is power I do not understand’.⁴ When reflecting upon the WTO system, theorists have tended to gravitate towards concepts of power that have emphasized either compulsory, institutional, or structural dimensions.⁵ Power may be represented in terms of one member denying market access to another, or by indirect control over the rules and procedures of the WTO, or by shaping the macro belief systems and norms of the trade policy game. My argument is that each of these approaches has certain limitations which, in turn, have cut short or worked against the development of more critical notions of power and legitimacy. One limitation concerns an overemphasis on the dynamics of legalization and institutionalized cooperation, often at the expense of understanding the manifold sources and effects of power. Another is rooted in materialist perspectives that have tended to privilege the study of overt, decision-making actions in the study of power. This understanding, however, can also be problematic, especially if it contributes to a process of ‘naturalizing’ the relations and structures of the WTO system. Critical concepts of power would historicize the trading order so as to understand the roots of taxonomies and how their political meanings can, in turn, shape the interests and capacities of actors.

Introduction

Instead, I argue in this book that one needs to think about power in the WTO system broadly rather than narrowly, to the extent that brute diplomatic moves or economic structures represent only one face of power. It seeks to show the analytical value of blending insights from the field of international political economy (IPE) with sociological perspectives on power in order to enhance our understanding of practices and outcomes. In particular, the book aims to examine critically how material power in this domain of capitalism cannot be conserved or transformed without substantial social labour, including the residual labour of past political struggles. In other words, I argue that the conceptual evaluation of power needs to be tightly paired with an analysis of forms of political legitimation in order to better understand patterns of stability and change in international trade relations. For any power in question to survive and prosper, to live beyond a single moment and replenish itself, it needs to be supported by forms of justification. How these representations of legitimacy are socially constructed and contested forms part of the *symbolic face* of power, the central focus of enquiry in this book.

The primary inspiration for this approach is the work of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, an important postwar intellectual who is widely cited in the social sciences, but has so far received very little attention within IPE. The notion of symbolic power is designed to focus on how language, as a key symbolic system of political value, both reflects and constitutes power.⁶ In this way, as Bourdieu puts it, the concept aims to uncover how agents struggle to burnish or tarnish existing forms of power. Understanding how these complex, often socially draining processes of legitimation work is important for several reasons. In one crucial sense, it helps to explain how and why certain political interests, and the social practices that encompass them, become recognized as 'acceptable' or 'universal', rather than 'arbitrary' or 'particular'. Subsequently, with the privileging of certain interests over others, Bourdieu suggests that the contests over such power shape the material distribution of resources, an often uneven process with lasting effects over time and space. The struggle over symbolic power is, at the same time, also a struggle over groups and their capacity for mobilization. Thus, in short, Bourdieu depicts symbolic power as a kind of '*worldmaking* power' in the sense that it involves the ability to construct and impose the 'legitimate vision of the social world and of its divisions'.⁷

In the literature on the political economy of world trade, such critical theorizing on power has been underexplored. This book seeks to explain why such a deficiency is important to acknowledge and how a Bourdieusian account of power can be put to work in the study of WTO politics. The central question addressed is: how does symbolic power manifest itself in the WTO

Symbolic Power in the World Trade Organization

system? Three main arguments are advanced. First, I argue that while the effects of symbolic power frame the entire trade policy game, conditioning the historically specific experiences of agents, there are particular phases that matter more than others. In particular, this is witnessed in struggles over classifications and at points when certain interests are codified into law. Second, the argument probes the intricate ways in which symbolic power is nurtured, protected, and disputed, particularly around tensions to define legitimate 'orthodox' and 'heterodox' opinions on trade policy. All WTO members can potentially cultivate symbolic power—and this presents opportunities for actors who are historically marginalized—but at the same time, one often finds that the most privileged players are equally, if not more, adept at steering such forces to their advantage. Third, I argue that symbolic power should be understood as a relational concept in regards to both its internal properties and external dynamics. Rather than viewing power as purely concentrated in units or locations, I have tried to understand the concept here in terms of relations of forces, some of which operate with a subtle or latent quality. In particular, attention is given to how symbolic power is engaged in a complex relationship with compulsory power and institutional power.

In terms of the empirical application of these conceptual ideas, the book examines two Southern-led coalitions in agricultural trade that have emerged during the Doha Round. The first case study centres on a west- and central-African group that campaigned for the reform of international cotton trade, while the second case study addresses a larger coalition that has attempted to rethink food security and rural development concerns in relation to the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA). These two cases present an informative comparative study between offensive and defensive Southern agendas in the WTO system and how each can be understood through the lens of symbolic power. In sum, therefore, the objective of the book is not to arrive at a single master category or theory of power, but to challenge IPE scholars, and WTO analysts in particular, to a more rigorous and, at the same time, flexible interrogation of this core concept.

The following introduction is designed to clarify the reasoning behind this research design. There are four main parts. First, I critically review some of the major literature on power analysis in reference to the trading regime and argue that different biases restrict the development of more critical appreciations of power. Second, I discuss in more detail the concept of symbolic power, its attributes, and what contribution it makes to the study of WTO negotiations. In this part I also provide a justification for focusing on agricultural trade and explain why the two cases studies have been selected. Third, a selection of relevant methodological considerations and problems are discussed. Fourth, the structure of the book is briefly outlined.

1.1 Power and the WTO system: conceptual conventions

When evaluating the existing literature on the role of power in the WTO system, it can be argued that in general two kinds of conceptual blind spots work to inhibit and narrow the possibilities for considering more critical understandings of power. These tendencies are found not only within IPE accounts of the WTO, but also within other disciplines including law and economics. The first bias is remarkable in a negative sense for its portrayal of a trading system that has largely moved *from-power-to-law*. Theorists within this tradition either do not grant, or reserve a limited role for, power analysis, preferring instead to focus on aspects of legalization and institutionalized cooperation. The second bias refers to those scholars who have argued that power ‘matters’ in explaining outcomes in WTO politics, but do so largely from a strict, materialist standpoint. While this second bias is an improvement compared to the former legalistic depiction, it is also deficient in important respects, placing too much emphasis on the study of overt, decision-making behaviour in the study of power. However, not all scholars of the WTO regime are prone to these conceptual orientations and predispositions. It is also important, therefore, to discuss how the notion of ideas, viewed from a constructivist perspective, can offer certain insights into the meaning of power in trade politics, including how power can be considered in a wider social context.

1.1.1 *Law and power*

The opinion that the multilateral trading system has evolved from a ‘power-based’ order of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to a ‘rule-based’ order of the WTO is a popular narrative, one found within policy-making circles as well as in the academy.⁸ From this historical reading, the GATT is represented as a Western diplomatic ‘club’, one that mostly marginalized Southern countries.⁹ Following the establishment of the WTO, references to the normatively appealing benefits of trade rules have been repeated *ad nauseam* by some of the chief defenders of the multilateral system. Often adopting views derived from utilitarianism or constitutional theory, such scholars have argued that a rule-based order is preferable because it helps to ‘seal off’ the field of international trade from the vagaries of domestic politics, as well as to guard against economic abuses and failures by representative governments.¹⁰ For some, this development is not simply an historical fact, but a prescriptive, normative goal that all actors should be seeking. The WTO system facilitates international cooperation and institutionalizes rules of reciprocity, monitoring, and enforcement. As a consequence, it is argued that less-privileged agents are more likely to support rule-oriented systems

Symbolic Power in the World Trade Organization

than power-oriented ones. In short, many have argued that the trade ‘legalists’ have thus emerged victorious over the trade ‘pragmatists’.¹¹ We are led to believe that this change should be welcomed by all Southern countries.

This view that trade rules can contain the negative consequences of power is, of course, not only restricted to legal theorists. In international relations (IR), within liberal institutionalism, there exists a similar tradition. According to Andrew Hurrell, these scholars have adopted a kind of ‘optimistic Hobbesianism’, believing that power can be moderated, if not bypassed, through rational bargaining and cooperation.¹² Power is thus acknowledged, but the emphasis is placed on how legalization can provide increased precision, delegation, and obligation in the management of trading relations.¹³ From this reading, the WTO system serves important functions for all members, including facilitating information exchange and reducing transaction costs. The Secretariat-organized Trade Policy Review Mechanism, which generates data on members’ trading practices, is often held up as one example of this activity. This instrument is said to be beneficial to all because it enables transparency and encourages public debate on trade issues.¹⁴ According to some authors, such institutional designs lead to Pareto-enhancing contracts for all actors, even if disproportionate gains may be transferred to the most powerful members.¹⁵ Thus, while there is an appreciation that the WTO may be an institution ‘of the privileged, by the privileged, and all too often for the privileged... in the absence of such institutions, dictation by strong states would be even more direct, less encumbered by rules’.¹⁶

Although both these interpretations on the role of power in the WTO system may appear slightly formal, they can still be criticized in two important respects. First, the history of the trading regime is not marked by some ‘graduation’ from power to law. On the contrary, the relationship between politics and rule-making has always been dynamic and unstable. As E. H. Carr put it, ‘politics and law are indissolubly intertwined... Law, like politics, is a meeting place for ethics and power.’¹⁷ Scholars such as Robert Howse, Matthew Dunne, Joost Pauwelyn, and Joseph Conti have all argued that a more persuasive narrative of the trading system would examine the interdependent relationship between power and legalization.¹⁸ The idea that laws are assumed to be ‘natural’ ordering principles ‘driving’ the system in a unidirectional manner is therefore strongly contested. Rather, the development of law, as constructivists and critical legal theorists have long argued, should always be considered as being a broad and deep social phenomenon focused on the classification and stabilization of meanings.¹⁹ Thus, there is power in particular types of knowledge and expertise, which Southern countries often struggle to access, leading one theorist to question if the ‘rule of law’ in fact blends into the ‘rule of lawyers’.²⁰

The second criticism, which is related to the first, is that these scholars tend to be bound to logocentric assumptions of cultural cohesion among diverse

Introduction

populations, and this has consequences for which concepts of power are privileged. There always exists the temptation for WTO analysts to begin to 'naturalize' and 'objectify' the very classifications and principles that they seek to describe and explain. For example, the idea of North–South 'partnerships' on trade issues may indeed be a valuable focus of study, but not at the expense of homogenizing economic practices and histories. If the observer fails to account adequately for how the WTO is a product of historical struggle and an institution of its time, there remains a possibility that their analysis may reinforce the existing mechanisms of legitimation, which, I would argue, are deeply interwoven into power relations. Of equal importance for my purposes, when we lose sight of the role of symbolic power, there is a danger of neglecting or missing how the legitimation of certain interests and practices can shape the way actors are represented and, in turn, how this informs their ability to move through the organization.

1.1.2 *Materialism and power*

It can be seen that both legal and institutionalist scholars require an underlying concept of power in their analyses. Before addressing how WTO members manage the consequences of anarchy and self-help, these theorists need at least a tacit acknowledgement of what power is, even if it does not feature as a central category. For most of the time, the compulsory notion of power is adopted. This is said to represent the most 'intuitive' definition of power, the production of obedience to the preferences of others. In the study of trade relations, many scholars have tended to understand power in this way. Power-as-property, in terms of market capacity, is treated as the first approximation of bargaining strength in negotiations. Thus, the US and the EU clearly exercise authority in relation to other members by threatening to open or close their markets.²¹ They are trade hegemony by virtue of the costs and adjustments they can force on to other actors. Similarly, other writers in the neo-Gramscian tradition have directly focused not only on the total aggregate of trade flows per member, but also on the specific corporate actors that benefit from the design of current rules. The material power structure of the WTO regime can therefore only be understood through examining how domestic and transnational firms contribute towards the drafting and promotion of WTO rules.²²

In turn, it is commonly argued that attention to the material capabilities of states provides the context for understanding organizational behaviour in WTO talks. One can see, in this respect, how Robert Dahl's formulation of power—that 'A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do'—continues to be a template and guiding principle for many scholars.²³ As David Baldwin has defined it, power

Symbolic Power in the World Trade Organization

is the capacity of one actor to compel another to do something they would not have done otherwise, not simply in respect to policy behaviour, but also in terms of the attitudes, values, and the inclination to act.²⁴ The researcher is expected to know when power is at work because it takes the form of direct, intentional, actor-to-actor (state) exercises. Historically, Northern countries have been able to adjust the preferences of others through their command of informational resources and their ability to successfully navigate the institutional mechanisms of the WTO system.²⁵ They not only challenge other members by using market access as a diplomatic weapon, but also threaten to litigate, shift to other forums, or deny political sympathy in other issue areas.²⁶ In sum, therefore, one must not forget how compulsory power can point to the power not only to make changes, but also to resist them.

The virtues of this theoretical convention appear clear and many WTO analysts stop at this point, assuming that they have ‘captured the essence’ of the concept of power. Yet this book argues that the compulsory power vision, while necessary, is also problematic in respect to what is analytically privileged. Rooted in a conservative and materialist understanding of behaviour, users of the concept tend to depict trade relations as rather resilient or, indeed, even fixed. If taken too far, such thinking can risk caricaturing the power of the powerful as pervasive or invulnerable. When considering how Southern groups in recent Doha Round negotiations have challenged the common wisdom on economic diplomacy, this orientation would seem in need of clarification as to what it can explain. Another related problem of overplaying the analysis of materialism concerns the focus on conflict and observable decision-making by privileged agents. As will be argued, such moves in many ways represent only one side of the coin. ‘Non-decision-making’ has always been important for the reproduction of power and the ‘suppression or thwarting of a latent or manifest challenge to the values or interests of the decision-maker’.²⁷ As Elmer Eric Schattschneider once expressed it, ‘*organization is the mobilization of bias*. Some issues are organized into politics while others are organized out.’²⁸ In sum, therefore, what is arguably left out of common appraisals of world trade politics is a sense of the ‘manufacturing’ or legitimation processes bound to the exercise of power. Broadly speaking, this book advances a conceptual framework that addresses how power can be understood through struggles over the justification of political ideas, a perspective which also, inevitably, touches upon some existing thinking in the field.

1.1.3 *Ideas and power*

The study of how certain ideas matter in explaining international trade politics is an increasingly prominent scholarly agenda. Such work can be framed in light of the turn towards social constructivist theorizing in IPE, although such

Introduction

moves have been less advanced than in other areas of IR.²⁹ In one sense, coming out of the conventional trade literature which builds upon, and reacts to, rationalist perspectives, the attention to ideas as an analytical category is not a new concern. For instance, in reference to the postwar economic bargain, John Ruggie characterizes his notion of 'embedded liberalism' as a 'fusion between power and legitimate social purpose'.³⁰ A focus on the hegemonic power of the US is not enough to explain how and why the postwar international trading order took its form. Rather, Ruggie calls attention to how normative struggles, such as over the welfare state in many Western polities, were intertwined with appeals for safeguards in the GATT talks. Elsewhere, Judith Goldstein's work on the origins of US agricultural and industrial trade policies also uses ideas as an important explanatory factor, with those key ideas that inform policy 'carried by individuals or groups with political clout'.³¹

In recent scholarship on trade politics, the conceptual analysis of so-called 'ideational' structures has been further refined and rethought. Adopting a more critical legal approach to the international trade regime, Andrew Lang has developed one of the most sophisticated accounts of the links between law and knowledge in the making of trade policy.³² Partly inspired by Ruggie and Bourdieu, among others, Lang argues that the trade system should be understood as a social space through which intersubjective meanings on the purpose of commerce are constructed, defended, and contested.³³ The point of such a perspective is to introduce a richer sociological sense of how trade law specifically and, more broadly, the 'background' beliefs in the system, can work to constitute certain forms of material power and not others. In this way, Lang is alert not only to how trade law generates its authority through appeals to objectivity, but also to the normative effects of such justifications, particularly when law appears to close the scope for deliberation on alternatives. For instance, the 'trade' versus 'non-trade' dichotomy for organizing issues, such as 'trade' versus 'labour rights', appears to be an innocent distinction, one that is part of the vocabulary of trade experts.³⁴ But Lang challenges this common view, arguing instead that the dichotomy has tended to legitimize and naturalize the *telos* of the liberal trade project via the privileging of those (commercial or political) values attached to 'free trade'. The division thus gives the appearance of subjecting the trade regime to political contestation but, in practice, such classifications typically work to 'reproduce and reconstitute' a conservative opinion, in the process blunting more profound critiques.³⁵ In short, Lang sees constructivism as playing a 'destabilizing' role in the trade literature, upsetting common analytical presumptions and norms.³⁶

Lang's work stands as an exemplary body of constructivist theorizing in trade politics, but there are other contributions of significance. For instance, as

Symbolic Power in the World Trade Organization

alluded to, Joseph Conti, writing in reference to the WTO Dispute Settlement Body (DSB), argues that concentrating ‘only on grand political games or structural trade issues misses how institutional dynamics, like legal capacity and experience, and interpersonal dynamics, like reputation, shame, and fear, shape processes of disputing’.³⁷ Importantly, Conti contends that ‘power relationships do not disappear in legal contexts, but are instead reconfigured, authorizing new strategies and resources in the context of political and symbolic skirmishing’.³⁸ Similarly, in a study of the telecommunication and airline industries, Cornelia Woll sheds light on how trade conflicts are embedded in a deeper social and political fabric.³⁹ In particular, Woll shows how the preference formation of firms and governments is much more complex than rationalist-informed models of IPE would suggest, involving agents that not only form their interests intersubjectively, but are often unsure about the ‘correct’ strategy to pursue at different junctures. Thus, in short, Conti, Woll, and Lang all introduce a welcome sense of social contingency into explanatory frameworks on trade politics.

This book certainly shares conceptual affinities with this literature. However, it is important to note some concerns. First, in keeping with constructivism broadly, there still remains a risk that researchers will stray into forms of ‘ideational essentialism’ in which the concept of power, while acknowledged to play some role, remains submerged and underspecified.⁴⁰ I am not arguing that ideas do not create effects deemed ‘powerful’ but rather that such symbolic structures can only be adequately understood within a symbiotic relationship with material structures. In other words, constructivist analysis in this vein needs to be tightly paired with political economy, which includes, crucially, close attention to complex political tactics and empirical inequalities. Furthermore, the conception of ‘ideas’ itself can be problematic. One major notion, which fits into a modified rational-choice framework *à la* Goldstein, tends to depict ideas as commodity-like tools that are “‘supplied” by “political entrepreneurs” on a “market-place” in response to “demands”, and then “circulate” through that market-place to be “peddled” and “consumed”’.⁴¹ Another main conception sees ideas being reproduced in more diffuse terms, as notions such as ‘shared beliefs’, ‘ideologies’, and ‘worldviews’ try to capture. The ideas-as-commodities vision has been criticized for its false compartmentalization by Lang and Woll. But I would argue that both conceptions should not be seen as irreconcilable in a larger research design. For instance, as will be explored in the case studies, some moments in trade talks feature policy-makers who appear to strategically manipulate certain ideas in a calculated manner. At the same time, however, one needs to understand how and why such ideas acquire a sense of legitimacy in the first place, a question that can only be addressed historically with attention to the

relationship between systems of social representation and processes of political institutionalization.

1.2 The argument

This section provides an introduction and outline of the major arguments expressed in the book. From a critical sociological perspective, the thought of Bourdieu serves as the primary theoretical inspiration for exploring WTO negotiations in the context of the Doha Round. The discussion is divided into two subsections. Initially, I explain in more detail the justifications for advancing a framework on symbolic power and how such notions can be translated to a study of the WTO system. Subsequently, the discussion moves to introduce the major empirical backdrop of the book: Southern countries and agricultural trade. The choice of the two case studies is also outlined.

1.2.1 *Uncovering symbolic power*

In the broader study of international politics, the potential utility of Bourdieu as a practical and theoretical inspiration has sparked increased interest in recent years, mirroring the appropriation of his ideas elsewhere in the social sciences. In larger terms, Bourdieu has been framed in light of the so-called 'practice turn' in IR, which has sought to conceive of political action in ways not captured by pure instrumental rationality (logic of consequences), norms (logic of appropriateness), or communicative action (logic of arguing).⁴² This interest has been particularly strong among scholars who address the politics of international security and diplomacy.⁴³ Indeed, the extent to which Bourdieu has now 'made it' in IR can be illustrated by special volumes dedicated to analysing his work and how it can inform international political explanations.⁴⁴ However, notwithstanding these developments, so far at least, Bourdieu's concepts have rarely been used for enhancing our understanding of the politics of the world economy, a neglect that this book aims to address.⁴⁵

The application of Bourdieu's conceptual framework of symbolic power to the specific study of the WTO system is certainly not an automatic move. However, I argue that his ideas do have merit and, coupled with a sense of the strengths and deficiencies of conventional notions of power, can enrich our understanding of political practices in this particular institution. Bourdieu was a subtle and eclectic thinker, one who was preoccupied with explaining the complex movements of power in society, but we should refrain from rigidly adopting his concepts. He is treated here as an intellectual stimulus, not a prophet. Thus my argument draws back from overextending his theory by

Symbolic Power in the World Trade Organization

attempting to translate too many of his concepts at the same time. In this sense, the book does not concentrate on his tripartite ‘species’ of power (economic, cultural, and social), nor does it adopt his more amorphous idea of a higher ‘field of power’ connecting privileged actors within different social domains.⁴⁶ Equally, the argument does not engage explicitly with his ‘habitus’ and ‘field’ notions, although the related ideas of ‘doxa’ and social space are debated. For some, this may appear that one is ‘talking up’ Bourdieu, only to leave behind some of his other major concepts. This is not the intention; rather, I am approaching his theorizing on power fully conscious of the challenges and risks of translation but, at the same time, fully convinced of his relevance to the particular study of WTO politics.

Symbolic power should be interpreted here as a framework that houses a series of important sub-concepts. With an eye on relational analysis, these ‘thinking tools’ work together to form a larger theoretical design. In essence, with a brevity that potentially does violence to Bourdieu’s imagination, symbolic power offers a way to conceptualize how existing forms of power acquire legitimacy or, as Bourdieu would put it, pass as (mis)recognized. It places particular attention on how language, as a pre-eminent symbolic system, both reflects and constitutes power, to the extent that the notion of ‘power’ is considered intertwined with the idea of ‘legitimation’.⁴⁷

There are four main contributions to this perspective that can be highlighted. First, such a framework offers new objects of analysis that are not present or are underplayed in common notions of power used to study the WTO system. Against the compulsory power vision, which tends either to discount the struggle over language or treat it as some ‘ephemeral’ or ‘negligible’ feature of power, the notion of symbolic power can be used to explore the properties of the ‘linguistic market’, a Bourdieu term for a bounded social space where only certain arguments acquire legitimacy. In turn, through applications to WTO politics, the book explores how the linguistic market in trade can be divided into three layers of abstraction:

- (1) a macro-level focus on major classifications for organizing problems
- (2) a meso-level struggle between ‘orthodox’ and ‘heterodox’ views on the ‘conventional wisdom’ in trade policy
- (3) a micro-level contest over the symbolic power associated with particular social spaces and individuals.

To further refine the empirical application, the book also deploys two other separate sociological notions: framing and mimicry. In addition, the approach is also distinctive for highlighting how WTO policy-making features so-called ‘taken-for-granted’ presumptions between agents and the political world, referred to here as ‘doxic relations’. Again, compared to

Introduction

common positivistic treatments of power that ignore the space occupied by the body, the notion of doxa addresses the internalization of power and, subsequently, its externalization in the form of 'durable dispositions' of diplomatic practice.⁴⁸

Second, once power is understood to operate through language, the book advances a series of arguments on how the struggle over symbolic power produces significant political effects. In contrast to other notions of power that are often fixated on pure material forces orchestrated by privileged actors, symbolic power is designed to showcase how many other WTO players can potentially participate or become immersed in this complex of power. Thus, I suggest that this may help us to better understand how Southern countries, in particular, have increased their activism in trade politics in recent years. At the same time, however, the argument makes clear that symbolic power is unevenly distributed in the trade policy game. For Bourdieu, one needs to examine the historical genesis of dominant classifications and orthodox opinions, particularly in terms of legal definitions, in order to understand the more potent forms of 'objectified' symbolic power. When a certain set of interests have been codified into law, they tend to 'crystallize' and universalize, shaping—but in no way predetermining—the scope for subsequent deliberation. Moreover, this relational contest to impose the legitimately recognized meanings of trade problems also matters for the identity of actors. Thus it will be argued that symbolic power informs not only agendas, but also the capabilities of actors to get themselves recognized, often in the form of a group, and, ultimately, to win a place in the WTO order.

Third, connecting these particular processes, the book explores how a Bourdieusian perspective helps to excavate and plot the often-elaborate schemes of justification seen in WTO politics. The point is not to discount that brute arm-twisting takes place, but to explain the more common legitimation struggles surrounding such compulsory power episodes. In this way, Bourdieu follows, and enriches, Max Weber's argument that a power left unvarnished or naked is always vulnerable to critique and thus will tend to seek out ways to secure its own reproduction.⁴⁹ These methods of justification take a variety of forms in the WTO arena, including appeals to historical principles of political exchange, such as reciprocity; disciplinary systems of knowledge, such as neoclassical trade theory; as well as references to specific rules and codes of conduct. Such methods are, indeed, debated in scholarship that has explored how agents draw upon WTO institutional power resources. However, the symbolic power framework can be distinguished in two senses:

Symbolic Power in the World Trade Organization

- (1) by drawing attention to the complex social labour engaged in these practices, within and beyond the social environment of Geneva
- (2) by thoroughly politicizing the examination of interests which includes, notably, interests concealed or distorted not only through rigorously defended laws, but also more subtle euphemisms and sleights of hand.

In this sense, the book explores how the nurturing, transmission, and consolidation of symbolic power is not a predetermined process but, rather, is often beset by setbacks and disturbances, as well as more fundamental contradictions and crises.

Finally, at a higher level of abstraction, in a manner reminiscent of Bourdieu's metatheory, the book aims to critique and dissolve what I view as unhelpful conceptual dichotomies, which surround the analysis of power. Most notably, this includes efforts to transcend the opposition between 'power' versus 'legitimation' and 'materialism' versus 'symbolism', which are, in turn, reflective of master dichotomies between 'structure' versus 'agency' or 'objectivism' versus 'subjectivism'. The point is to explore how the political economy of practices in the WTO environment cannot be reduced to purely materialistic forces. Rather, the evolution of the system rests upon the interdependence between symbolic structures and material structures. In particular, the book aims to explore the ways in which the three forms of power—compulsory, institutional, and symbolic—relate to each other, rather than setting up a 'gladiatorial' battle between them for intellectual supremacy.⁵⁰ Thus, I would argue that we need a framework on symbolic power to more effectively understand when and under what conditions the other modes of power acquire added analytical meaning. For instance, actions of compulsory power are sometimes used to quickly meet a challenge that cannot be accomplished by more arduous processes of symbolic power. The coercive move may be used to cut short a rival strategy of legitimation, but one would need to examine the content of such symbolic power to understand why compulsory power was being exercised at that point in time. In short, therefore, symbolic power matters because it has the potential to define the political world through the visions and divisions that agents both conceptualize and materially construct.⁵¹

1.2.2 *Empirical context and framework*

The book takes seriously the difficult task of trying to put concepts into action. To divorce theoretical knowledge from practical knowledge would be to miss how each body can potentially inform the other and thus enhance our overall understanding. This subsection provides the empirical backdrop for the main arguments and illustrations, focused on introducing a Southern-centric

Introduction

viewpoint, the significance of agricultural concerns, before outlining the constitution of the case studies. However, before tackling these points, an initial qualification is necessary here: the non-completion of the Doha Round at the time of writing. It is true that examining contemporary events that are still evolving presents difficulties, particularly in respect to major political projects. Yet, in regards to both case studies, the argument covers a substantial period of events over the past decade when Southern countries have engaged in power struggles and institutional adaptation. In addition, the negotiations on agriculture are arguably very close to the 'endgame' in the sense that debates are now focused on technical 'modalities' rather than any radically new propositions.⁵² In this respect, key turning points in the process of negotiations require serious analysis and such work can be conducted now. It is also worth noting in passing that significant books dedicated to examining the Doha Round have also been published in recent years.⁵³

SOUTHERN-CENTRIC PERSPECTIVE

The examination of Southern country experiences in the multilateral trading system has become an increasingly important field of enquiry in trade scholarship. Such work is particularly noticeable given the general paucity of relevant studies conducted during the postwar GATT period.⁵⁴ Following the founding of the WTO in 1995, a new wave of literature has sought to explain the changing political and economic fortunes of Southern countries. Different enquiries have been pursued, covering a range of trade problems and actors. For instance, one prominent set of studies, epitomized by the work of John S. Odell and Amrita Narlikar, has explored the making of coalitions and negotiation analysis, including assessment of the factors that have historically led to effective policy outcomes.⁵⁵ Other book-length enquiries have probed particular Southern trade issues, such as those related to services and intellectual property.⁵⁶ General edited collections focused on Southern WTO members have also emerged in recent years, with the emphasis on explaining the recent history of different trade problems.⁵⁷ In addition, as already referenced, civil society analysts have also been sensitive to the position of Southern countries in the WTO and have offered interesting snapshots on aspects of negotiations.⁵⁸ Thus my argument aims to speak to, and enrich, the study of Southern countries posed in this wider literature.

At the same time, however, there are two important qualifications to note. First, in regards to the problems raised by agricultural trade, one cannot possibly examine all Southern country concerns that have emerged in the Doha Round. Such an objective would be a multi-volume undertaking. Thus 'the South' in question in this book is inevitably restricted. The argument makes no claim to capture some immutable 'Southern viewpoint', one which is seemingly fit for all, since such a position would do violence to the

Symbolic Power in the World Trade Organization

extraordinary complexity of concerns in this area. Rather, I have tailored the book to focus on some specific clusters of countries with common concerns. The analysis is also restricted in another sense: for how it remains Geneva-focused, with limited background context on the domestic political economy forces at work in different countries. Again, this decision reflects a concern with designing a feasible enquiry within the boundaries available here. Second, although the orientation is biased towards Southern countries, this clearly does not denote an objectified analysis where such actors are located in a vacuum. With an eye on Bourdieu, the discussion is always relational, including exploring in detail various struggles that have taken place along North–South and South–South lines.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE

As even a casual observer of WTO negotiations will have noticed, agriculture has come to dominate the agenda of the Doha Round, to an extent that was arguably not easily foreseen in the heat of Qatar in November 2001. While the US and the EU congratulated themselves on the advance of their ‘post-modern’ trade agenda, shifting attention towards further liberalization of industrial products, services, and other ‘behind-the-border’ issues such as investment, many Southern countries argued strongly that their concerns in agriculture had been inadequately addressed. This was not a new complaint. The implicit North–South ‘grand bargain’ that defined the Uruguay Round (1986–1994), where agricultural trade was brought under the multilateral disciplines of the AoA, featured a common belief on the part of Southern countries that significant economic opportunities would emerge. But the Uruguay Round hangover proved serious for many Southern countries: the average depth of tariff cuts was substantially greater than that agreed to by high-income countries and, in addition, costly commitments were bundled into the ‘single undertaking’.⁵⁹ As the projected gains from agriculture have often proved elusive, this bargain has become increasingly unstable. In advance, as well as in the aftermath, of the Doha Ministerial, Southern countries were thus determined that agriculture would not be so easily sidelined in the future.

But why is agricultural trade of paramount importance for many Southern countries? From one policy perspective it may seem puzzling why the sector is so contentious in the WTO system. Trade in agricultural goods accounts for only 4% of world GDP and 9% of global exports. As a contribution to the international economy, agriculture has been steadily declining for decades, not only within Northern countries but within Southern countries as well. For instance, as a share of international merchandise trade, agriculture has fallen from 42 to 11% in Southern countries.⁶⁰ But these figures do not reveal the disproportionate reliance of Southern countries on agricultural trade for

Introduction

export revenue, employment, and, by association in many instances, political stability. One can consider sets of economic and political reasons that help explain why the issue has absorbed extraordinary amounts of political capital during the Doha Round.⁶¹

The substantive economic reasons have become increasingly clear for many analysts: agriculture represents a core sector for most Southern countries, an area in which they often have comparative advantage. The production of agriculture is a critical source of foreign exchange, investment, and economic growth for many Southern countries. For instance, as a percentage of GDP, agriculture averages 10.3% in Southern countries, with an annual growth rate of 2.9%. By contrast, in Northern countries, the sector forms just 2.4% of GDP, growing only slightly by 0.8% per year.⁶² In terms of the economically active population in Southern countries, 53% are engaged in agriculture-related work. Dependence upon the export of three or fewer agricultural products for foreign exchange remains a critical problem for many countries. For instance, 43 Southern countries rely upon a single commodity for more than 20% of their total revenues from merchandise exports.⁶³

At the same time, Northern country support programmes that restrict access to wealthy markets, generate large surpluses and subsidize exports. Many critics have noted the transferring of government support funds to a concentrated number of large agricultural firms. For instance, according to the Washington, DC-based Environmental Watch Group, among subsidy recipients, the top 10% of US farms collected 73% of all subsidies (\$121 billion out of \$165 billion) from 1995–2005, an annual average of \$34,190 per recipient.⁶⁴ In 2004, across the countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as a whole, it was estimated that the value of support to producers was \$279 billion or €226 billion. As measured by percentage producer subsidy equivalent (PSE), support accounted for 30% of farm receipts.⁶⁵ Producers in Southern countries are often excluded from these Northern markets and forced to compete against heavily subsidized competition in international and even local markets.⁶⁶

At the same time, the political relevance of the negotiations on agriculture are now closely associated not only with the completion of the Doha Round, but also with the overall legitimacy of the WTO system itself. It cannot be overestimated how the reform of the AoA is now intimately tied to notions of fairness or 'diffuse reciprocity' in trading relations and, more broadly, international politics. Representatives from Northern governments seldom miss an opportunity to preach the virtues of trade openness and external integration strategies, while remaining resolutely protectionist themselves in key sub-sectors and categories. The agricultural rules in the WTO system largely perpetuate a system under which the distribution of agricultural trade is shaped not by comparative advantage in terms of competitiveness, but by

Symbolic Power in the World Trade Organization

access to subsidies, an area in which privileged countries have an unrivalled advantage. While some modifications and policy reforms have been introduced by Northern members, failure to fundamentally change these conditions will inevitably reinforce a perception that WTO rules skew the benefits of trade towards the North. The degree to which the increased international awareness of inequities in trading relations actually impacts on the WTO agenda can be debated, but there is no doubt that the backdrop is considerably different compared to the years of the Uruguay Round.

To risk repeating myself, the interests of Southern countries in agricultural trade are in no way uniform. One cannot adequately understand alternative negotiating positions without exploring how Southern countries may have either offensive or defensive interests, or a blend of both. Thus recalling the conceptual framework on symbolic power, Southern countries could have policies anchored around orthodox or heterodox calculations, or a fusion of both. Internationally competitive producers in Argentina or Thailand are clearly different from countries such as India and Kenya that have large numbers of subsistence farmers, while some members such as Brazil have a mix of both offensive and defensive concerns.⁶⁷ In the context of Doha economic projections for instance, some authors have argued that the major beneficiaries of agricultural liberalization will likely be those countries in the Cairns group, which features mostly middle-income Southern countries with well-developed export industries, whereas members in sub-Saharan Africa would receive very little.⁶⁸ At the same time, one should not forget that some Southern countries and groupings have also become dependent upon preserving the associated benefits of the agricultural regime, notably preferences. Thus, WTO negotiations on agriculture are as much about protectionism and the preservation of the status quo as efforts to advance liberalization and reform the AoA.

CONSTITUTING THE CASE STUDIES

In terms of guiding criteria, the choice of the case studies was structured by three factors. In the first instance, there was an evaluation of the population of potential cases defined as being Southern-led coalitions on agriculture within the Doha Round. The purpose at this stage was to begin the process of ‘casing’ by examining the interplay and ‘fit’ between the empirical and the conceptual framework on power. This was not a predetermined method, but involved a considerable degree of research and refinement before settling on the two designated cases.⁶⁹ Furthermore, in order to evaluate how symbolic power operates through the WTO system, the choice of cases had to capture degrees of variation. To facilitate cross-comparisons, one case was chosen for its predominant concern with orthodox themes, while the other was mainly characterized by struggles over the definition of heterodoxy. To recall the

Introduction

conceptual discussion, it needs to be underscored that while each of these cases gravitates towards one of these poles, I also highlight considerable tension and interplay between orthodoxy and heterodoxy visions within each case. Re-reading Bourdieu helped to improve my understanding of how he combined theory and practice in his own work. In turn, explaining this intra-case relational complexity was important for enhancing the overall argument. Finally, for purposes of feasibility, each case was selected to provide a sufficient degree of research control. Both cases have a considerable history in the Doha Round, with existing official documentation and policy-related analysis providing a basis for scholarly examination. Where necessary, the analysis featured consideration of national and regional-level policy-making. With these factors in mind, the major arguments of each case can be outlined.

The first case centres on how a group of west- and central-African (WCA) countries—Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mali—launched a campaign for the reform of international cotton trade by challenging the subsidies of major producers, particularly the US. Since 2003, the cotton initiative in the Doha Round has stood as an ambitious case of Africa's desire to be integrated into the trading system and yet also receive reparations for past injuries. At its core, I argue that the cotton initiative has been a struggle over competitiveness or, more precisely with an eye on symbolic power, competing representations of legitimacy in claims of competitiveness. What makes it distinctive is that strong claims of competitiveness were articulated by a group of less-privileged members against the US, one of the presumed 'teachers' of orthodoxy. The case explores how and why the initiative was born, as well as its subsequent incorporation into the Doha agenda. The genesis of cotton as 'an issue' is critically examined, focusing on how the WCA countries constructed a novel 'competitive victim' frame to define themselves and the problem. This frame was effective in many respects, but it also featured tensions that would later be exploited by the US and other actors who were threatened by the campaign. I argue that what followed was the introduction of a politically driven 'counter-frame', which divided the problem into a 'trade-related' component and a 'development-related' component. It is important to understand why and how this distinction was constructed, institutionalized, and monitored. By scrutinizing the relationship between framing and institutional power, as well as noting incidents of compulsory power, I suggest that the counter-frame won over the original frame, leading to a re-positioning of the demanders and a re-calibration of their expectations.

The second case examines a larger and more diverse coalition of Southern countries, led by Indonesia for much of its history, which has campaigned for the establishment of defensive policy instruments linked to the category of Special and Differential Treatment (SDT). This case can essentially be defined as a struggle over Southern-centric heterodox notions related to food security

Symbolic Power in the World Trade Organization

and rural development in the AoA. This initiative has its origins in a growing dissatisfaction on the part of many Southern members with the classifications and policy tools of the AoA; in particular, how the accord did not provide effective options for enhancing the defence of vulnerable agricultural populations. Following an economic and legal analysis of these problems, the case explores how this group of Southern countries mobilized the symbolic and institutional resources necessary to renew the classification struggle over heretical policy ideas on SDT. This work began with the formulation of a frame called the 'development box' in the late 1990s. Specific attention is devoted to explaining how the often-laborious battle over taxonomies informed the scope for subsequent deliberation and thus the choices and expectations of Southern countries in the negotiations. The final part of the argument continues this examination by analysing the emergence of the now official concepts of Special Products (SPs) and the Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM). The discussion critically assesses how these heterodox concepts were gradually codified and institutionalized into the Doha agenda through attention to how Southern countries drew upon symbolic power. Throughout the discussion, attention is paid to the enduring battles these agents played with critics who sought to erode their legitimacy.

1.3 Methodology

This book is derived from four main sets of sources. First, existing literature has been consulted and critiqued. Given the central focus on the conceptualization of power and legitimation processes, this has necessitated a broad reading, not only in reference to debates within IR and IPE, but also sociology and political theory. In turn, this analysis provided the context for investigating the thought of Bourdieu. The adaptation of the symbolic power framework is derived from different sources in his *oeuvre*, but of particular importance was *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), a work which attempted to synthesize his thinking at that time.⁷⁰ In respect to the international trade literature, a range of scholars and analysts were consulted, with a special focus on the history of Southern-country activism. Studies of agricultural trade policy were also evaluated and, where possible, recent academic literature related to the case studies was integrated into the discussion. Second, the research of international organizations, intergovernmental institutions, and technical NGOs was utilized, most prominently, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the South Centre, and the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD). Third, a range of official documents were accessed and analysed, not only WTO, but also statements and reports issued

Introduction

by coalitions. A small number of these documents were not public records, but given to me privately by country representatives.

In terms of working with these three sets of sources, the research process featured inevitable methodological challenges, which had to be recognized, understood, and frequently reconsidered. One significant concern was the very application of the framework on symbolic power to the WTO setting, something which has never been attempted before. In order to understand the conditions under which symbolic power could aid our understanding of WTO politics, including comparing such theorizing to other rival explanations, a systematic research strategy was adopted. The book has therefore taken seriously the method of process tracing in order to reveal the genesis and struggle over problems in WTO negotiations, including attention to moments that may appear inconsequential at first glance but acquire meaning when considered holistically and in relation to other elements.⁷¹ This included a fine-grained legal and economic analysis of WTO documents in order to appreciate the arguments they contained. But this reading was always overlaid with attention to the potential for political motivations and informational biases contained in each source. For some, this micro-level process tracing may appear rather excessive or dense, but it will be suggested that such a method is necessary in order to better explain the subtleties of power relations that are often missed through conventional conceptual lenses.

The fourth major source was interviews: 37 in total. The decision to adopt interviewing as a strategy was made for three main reasons:

- (1) to explore the reasons why actions were taken by actors, not simply the reasons themselves
- (2) because some of the areas of analysis concern recent events to which existing literature was of limited help
- (3) to verify existing claims in the literature and to establish what I did not know.⁷²

Interviews were conducted with Geneva-based and Washington, DC-based ambassadors, attachés, and other political officials. Relevant staff at the WTO Secretariat were also interviewed. Other subjects included civil society analysts (such as from Oxfam International), trade consultants (such as those based at ICTSD), and officials who worked in intergovernmental agencies (such as the South Centre and the International Cotton Advisory Committee). In reference to both case studies, I found that some of these experts were not only monitoring negotiations, but actively contributing to the drafting and formulation of country strategies, indicating their growing importance to the trade policy process of Southern countries. Not all interviewees were incorporated into the writing of the case studies, often because their responses confirmed findings

Symbolic Power in the World Trade Organization

discovered elsewhere. In addition, a small number of subjects requested that their identities remain anonymous.

When reflecting upon the study overall, the use of interviews proved to be important in terms of better exploring a theorization of symbolic power within the WTO system. It was invaluable to hear actors explain particular histories and problems in their own terms and, subsequently, for me to critically question those terms in the time available. In keeping with the conceptual objectives, common themes in all interviews included a focus on the roots and common understandings of trade issues, linguistic terms and argument construction, relations with other actors, and the means for managing criticism. In the two case study chapters, direct quotes are used for particularly telling points; at other times, the opinion of the subject is incorporated into the background of the discussion. In addition, following Bourdieu, since the analysis of symbolic power is concerned with latent forms of power or political activity that is not normally labelled 'power', a careful interviewing technique was adopted. This was in order to tease out not only what was accomplished, but also what options were discarded or indeed not even conceived. In this regard, I sometimes drew upon elements of counterfactual reasoning with subjects. Such methods are, however, never straightforward to conduct, particularly because not all agents possess the same degree of institutional memory or expertise. In short, interviewing is a complex craft, not a science, but most participants proved keen to explain in detail their various experiences.

1.4 Outline plan

The book is organized into five main chapters. Chapter 2 offers a critical introduction and re-examination of the concept of power in relation to the WTO system. It begins by briefly considering some metatheoretical issues related to the notion, including its essentially contested character and purpose in scholarly enquiries. This is followed by an evaluation of the analytical strengths and deficiencies of the two notions of power commonly considered in WTO political analysis: compulsory and institutional. In a bridge to the Bourdieu-inspired framework, the chapter ends with a discussion of the concepts of structural power and productive power, including noting the limited applications of these notions to trade politics. Chapter 3 provides a detailed unpacking of the conceptual approach of symbolic power, including attention to the notion of 'taken-for-granted' doxic relations and the key properties of the linguistic market. Again, examples are drawn from trade politics to illuminate the utility of these notions. The end of the chapter further clarifies and extends Bourdieu's contribution in two ways: through a brief comparison with the literature on argumentation in IR, and through debating

Introduction

the concepts of framing and mimicry as useful ancillary tools for exploring the practical effects of symbolic power.

The fourth chapter focuses on the WCA cotton initiative. It begins by first discussing how cotton was constructed as a problem in the Doha Round through an examination of the political economy of the trade as well as sources of policy debate. The chapter then turns to critically dissect the original WCA proposal, arguing that the dossier was rooted in orthodox justifications, but also features appeals to heterodox reasoning. The remainder of the discussion is devoted to explaining how the cotton issue was politically managed through a complex series of combined symbolic power and institutional power forces. In the final part, the chapter brings the results of these activities into context through debating the most recent phase of cotton negotiations. An examination of the evolution of a set of Southern-centric heretical ideas on agricultural policy over a period of around ten years is the focus of Chapter 5. The discussion begins with an economic and legal analysis explaining why many Southern countries have argued that the AoA does not adequately address their defensive policy needs. This debate, in turn, provides the context for evaluating how a group of countries began to coalesce around the notion of the 'development box', before later constructing the now official categories of SPs and the SSM. Throughout, I pay attention to when and how the struggle over symbolic power mattered in shaping the definition of heterodox issues centred on food security and rural development. The final chapter takes the form of a conclusion where the major findings of the book are summarized.