

Abstract

This paper examines the generation and uses of expert knowledge around trade matters and the WTO's Doha Development Agenda (DDA) in particular. It examines the input of such experts into the negotiation process, particularly through what is emerging as the dominant method of trade analysis – computable general and partial equilibrium modelling. These are produced with ever greater frequency, particularly at pressure points in the DDA's negotiations, with a view to garnering forward momentum towards greater liberalisation. However, the paper also argues that this 'old guard' of scholars has lost a great deal of the traction that they once had. Five interrelated reasons are put forward for why this is so: (i) (perceptions of) changing global (and trade) relations of power; (ii) the unpicking of the consensus on trade liberalisation; (iii) the emergence of a new cadre of 'ambassador intellectuals' as part of a wider movement of intellectualism emanating from, or sympathetic to, the interests of developing countries; (iv) a noticeable ratcheting up of in-house trade knowledge capacity within developing countries; and (v) fundamental changes in access to information, and the production of knowledge, about trade.

Keywords: WTO, DDA, CGE, experts, rising powers, emerging powers

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