

The future of global trade and the WTO

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Abstract

Purpose – *The global governance of trade is in a deadlock and the WTO is suffering from a long standing crisis of legitimacy. This paper aims to analyse the main issues which might influence the governance of world trade from now until 2030 and present quantitative projections of international trade.*

Design/methodology/approach – *The research on the main issues which might influence the governance of world trade from now until 2030 draws on a detailed analysis of the WTO and trade policies. Four scenarios of the world economy are presented, which are derived from the international AUGUR research project "Challenges for Europe in the world in 2030" coordinated by Paris Nord University. The analysis takes into account econometric forecasting of world trade conducted in the framework of this project.*

Findings – *First, the failure of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations to reach its ambitious agenda derives from the discrepancy between the governance of world trade and the new power relationship prevailing in the world economy, with new emerging powers (China, India, etc.) rapidly increasing their share of world trade. Second, the continuous restructuring of world trade and economy, which goes together with new forms of globalization, will increase pressure for a profound reform of the governance of world trade in the next few years.*

Research limitations/implications – *This paper calls for a reform of world trade governance, especially of the missions of WTO within a renovated economic world order. Future research could investigate more deeply the potential for regional trade integration, which is reinforced by international production networks. Regional trade agreements might be an increasing alternative to multilateral trade agreements.*

Originality/value – *This paper brings new ideas by raising the issue of the governance of world trade using a prospective approach, with the aim to identify the key channels through which international trade integration will impact the world economy. This study bases its analysis on potential scenarios from now on until 2030, each of these scenarios corresponding to a specific institutional configuration.*

Keywords *International trade, China, Governance, WTO, Regional integration*

Paper type *Research paper*

Since the middle of the twentieth century, a new wave of globalisation – going together with fast trade and financial liberalisation – led to an intensive and continuous opening up process of world economies (WTO, 2008). Over more than 50 years until the international crisis which started in 2008, world merchandise exports grew almost twice as quickly as world production. This went together with a rapid restructuring of international trade over the last few decades: growing weight of emerging countries, especially China which joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001; declining trend of the share of industrialized countries; new international division of labour and geographic fragmentation of production processes within value chains, etc.

Multilateral trade liberalisation has been conducted continuously since 1947 first within GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) then within WTO, which replaced GATT since 1994. This trade liberalisation process (not only multilateral but also unilateral and

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bilateral) sped up and generalised from the 1980s. The “liberal revolution” started by Reagan-Thatcher first struck the USA and Europe then extended to developing countries following the debt crisis (1982). This is also when China started opening up and reintegrating the world economy. At the end of the 1980s, the fall of the Berlin wall (1989) was followed by the end of communist regimes in Europe.

All in all, the Marrakech agreements forming the WTO marked the golden age of liberalism, when all countries converted to market economies and free trade. The spirit of the WTO was to apply a universal model of free trade to all developed and developing countries, and to all economic sectors (Benaroya and Cling, 2001). Following this model, the WTO has contributed to deepening and consolidating international trade liberalisation since its inception. In this respect, the current crisis of the WTO is also the indicator of a more general crisis of global trade governance (Deblock, 2010; Abbas, 2011). There is a striking discrepancy between the governance of world trade under the aegis of WTO and the rapid changes of the world economy and trade, 20 years after WTO was established, there is a striking discrepancy between the governance of world trade under the aegis of WTO and the rapid changes of the world economy and trade, as well as the new economic, social and environmental challenges of the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The objective of this paper is to establish an in-depth diagnosis on the sources of the crisis of the governance of world trade, to propose some solutions in order to solve this crisis and last of all to design a prospective analysis on trade governance in relationship with the international regulation of the world economy. Section 1 describes the ongoing trends of globalisation in relation to trade, with a prospective view. Section 2 analyses how and why the Doha cycle has failed, in relationship to the evolution of the world balance of power and of the respective roles of the State and markets. Section 3 reviews the challenges concerning the extension of the world trade regulation to new areas, such as to include human development, the link with finance, environment and energy. Last of all, Section 4 presents four scenarios of world governance derived from the analysis conducted in this paper, focusing on trade regulation.

1. Restructuring of world trade and new forms of globalization

International trade has been changing deeply over the last decades. This long term restructuring trend had a turning point from the 1980s, when all developing countries converted to export-led growth policies while developed countries sped up their trade and financial liberalisation process (WTO, 2008).

The most striking change is the growing world market share of China and, more generally, of big emerging countries, which will soon overtake industrialized countries of the Triad (The USA, The EU and Japan) following a declining trend. This restructuring went together with an increasing globalisation of manufacturing production within international value added chains, contributing to the rapid growth of both world and regional trade.

The growing weight of emerging countries in world trade

The ongoing geographic restructuring of world trade characterises by a rapid growth of the share of China and a few emerging countries in world exports. Since 2009, China has become the first exporter of goods in the world^[1], its world market share increasing from 3.9 per cent in 2000 to 11.2 per cent in 2012. Starting from a low level, India has more than doubled its world market share over the 2000s, which reached 2 per cent in 2012. One can also underline South America’s performance, due especially but not only to Brazil, and Russia’s (together with neighbor ex-Soviet countries), thanks to the increase of energy price.

Conversely, the share of industrialized countries in world exports is following a declining trend. Whereas the Triad countries made 58 per cent of world exports in 2000, their share was reduced to 44 per cent in 2012; the share of developed countries on the whole was reduced from 65 per cent to 51 per cent over the same period.

Beyond this general trend, three stylized facts deserve to be noticed:

1. First of all, the emerging countries' progress concerns a wide range of products; of course, export growth for manufactured products is spectacular and benefits from these countries' comparative advantage in labour-intensive goods (garments, electronic products, etc.); but emerging countries are also improving their position quickly in agricultural products and food industries; this is especially the case in cereals, meat, sugar, etc. for Brazil (and Argentina to a lesser extent), two countries which have abundant fertile land resources (Pouch, 2012); the world market share of developing countries (China and India mostly) is also increasing for services; although the US and other industrialized countries are still predominant in services exports, their share is also declining as it is for other products.
2. Second, a very limited number of developing countries is benefitting from this trend, that is mostly China and India; over the last decades, developing countries' exports have fluctuated because of the fluctuations of commodity prices, but the global market shares of developing regions (Africa, South America excluding Brazil, Asia excluding China) has remained pretty stable; especially, the market share of the Asian dragons and tigers has stagnated since the 1997 Crisis (Vietnam being an exception); China's remarkable performance has therefore been obtained partly to the detriment of Asian competitors, reflecting a well-known "crowding out" effect related to export-led growth strategies.
3. Last of all, the geographic restructuring of trade has also concerned imports; the share of developing countries (China and India especially) in world imports has also increased massively, while the share of industrialized countries has declined; the growth of services imports by developing countries is however slower than their export growth, which corresponds to a reduction of their huge deficit for services; to sum it up, developing countries are becoming major players for exports but also as markets for all traded products.

The contribution of trade policies to these changes has been analyzed by many economic studies (see especially Santos-Paulino and Thirlwall, 2004). They point out two major elements:

1. First of all, multilateral trade liberalization conducted within GATT then WTO has largely contributed to world trade growth, thanks to drastic tariff reductions and the establishment of accepted international trade rules; financial liberalization (all major currencies becoming convertible) has also played an important role; tariff disarmament was first limited to developed countries (where tariffs are now almost null for manufactured products), then extended to developing countries since 1994 (which were constrained to implement multilateral tariff reductions).
2. Second, the Marrakech agreements have also promoted an unbalanced trade growth benefitting industrialized countries (especially in services) and a few emerging countries; China (for manufactured products) and Brazil (food products) have been among the main beneficiaries; this also generated huge trade unbalances (see especially the huge Chinese trade surplus until the beginning of the 2010 s, and the equally huge US trade deficit); however, most emerging countries have not increased their global market share since the 1990 s, and the least developed countries even lost out (for the case of Africa, see Goldin and van der Mensbrugghe, 1995).

Because of the inertia of these ongoing structural changes, the previously described trends will continue over the next few decades. According to world econometric forecasts conducted within the AUGUR project, [2] world trade would still grow much faster than world production by 2030, which means that the opening up process of the world economies would continue (AUGUR, 2013; Alphametrics, 2013). According to these forecasts, the world market share of China and India would each double by 2030, their combined market share reaching more than 25 per cent of the total; the total share of developing countries would rise to 65 per cent. The market share of developed countries would decrease to 35 per cent, the EU being the main loser (almost – 10 points, due especially to low growth of

intra-EU trade because of mediocre European growth performance), followed by the US and Japan.

These results are striking insomuch as China's and India's gains correspond approximately to the Triad countries' losses. Following past trends, we expect the market share of other developed and developing countries to remain relatively stable. Such would be especially the case for the Community of Independent States (CIS), South America and for East Asian countries (excluding China and possibly Vietnam). These forecasts are globally consistent with forecasts made by the Asian Development Bank also for 2030, one difference being that the ADB study anticipates a gain in market share for ASEAN countries and for Latin America (Anderson and Strutt, 2011).

New forms of globalization

Geographical fragmentation of production speeds up the emergence of new actors in world trade, and more generally contributes to the growth of world trade, including intra-regional trade. According to Krugman (2008), the value of the distance coefficient has doubled in gravity models since 1960 which means that trade between neighbor countries has increased more than other forms of trade (to put it simply, neighbor countries have doubled their bilateral trade over this period, everything else being equal).

This is all the more so as different stages of production of one good, which were before located in one country only are now increasingly disseminated in various countries which are part to the "value chain". This fragmentation process is fostered by the decrease of transport costs and by the development of new information and communication technologies, as well as by the continuous tariff reduction at the international level over the last few decades and massive Foreign Direct Investment flows. The plurilateral Information Technologies Agreement (ITA) signed within WTO in 1996 (meeting the demands of big multinational firms of this sector) has liberalized trade of electronic products and contributed to the soaring international trade of computers, electronic components and telecommunications equipment.

Within this new organisation of labour defined as "trade in tasks", "countries no longer export exclusively finished products but tend to specialize in specific stages of the production process" (WTO & IDE-JETRO, 2011). The concept of "International Production Networks" (IPNs) is also used to describe this process, the latter corresponds to an approach focusing more on the relationship between firms operating within the value chains rather than on the productive activities of the Global Value Chains (ARTNeT, 2011). The dynamism of intra-firm trade flows reflects the internationalisation of value added chains: in the case of the US, the only country for which direct data is available, 48 per cent of imports and 30 per cent of merchandise exports are considered to be intra-firm trade flows (Miroudot *et al.*, 2009).

Asia is the region the most advanced in the world concerning this fragmentation of production process, with a growing importance of vertical intra-industry trade and increased outsourcing especially for Japanese firms. If we adopt a value added content approach, estimates by OECD show that around 40 per cent of the value of big Asian emerging countries' exports (China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, etc.) corresponds to imported inputs, often from other Asian countries (Miroudot *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, it is most difficult to evaluate properly the importance of bilateral trade. Over a few decades, the major US trade deficit with Japan has been replaced but a huge deficit with China, but this is partly an optical illusion as "usually it has been the last stage of the supply chain, the assembly of the final products, which has relocated to China, with the production of the core components remaining within the original country." Indeed, Chinese exports to the US are grossly overestimated as it is clearly shown by the example of the I-phone: this product is exported for 200 USD a piece but only 5 USD of value added in China, the rest coming from Japan, other Asian countries, Europe and the USA (Miroudot *et al.*, 2009). This means that measuring "exports value added" and not "exports value" of I-phones would divide the amount of Chinese exports by 40 for these products.

The growth of South-South trade derives partly from this process of regional division of labour (ADB, 2011). These elements help explain the increasing trade integration within the major world economic areas (Europe, North America, East Asia), and the need for countries belonging to these areas to sign regional trade agreements between themselves. This stimulates growth of trade in intermediate products: in 2009, trade in intermediate goods was the most dynamic sector of international trade, representing more than 50 per cent of non-fuel world merchandise trade and 64 per cent of the total imports of the Asia region (WTO & IDE-JETRO, 2011).

This section underlined the ongoing North-South restructuring of world trade, and the contribution of new forms of globalisation conducted by multinational firms to trade growth. As we show in the following section, this “great transformation” of world trade and of its players did not go together an equivalent change of international trade governance, which rules have been established by the Marrakech Agreements.

2. Deadlock at the WTO

The Marrakech Agreements of 1994 were largely biased towards industrialized countries and to a lesser extent towards big developing countries (Benaroya and Cling, 2001). They created the conditions for a deep North-South conflict which is still going on at the beginning of the 2010 s. The Doha Round had also been named “Doha Development Agenda”, which recognised this unbalance and the necessity to rebalance trade agreements in favour of developing countries on the whole.

After several decades of trade liberalisation limited to merchandise products, member countries were aiming within the Doha Round at continuing trade liberalisation for these products but also at extending it to agricultural products and services, as they committed themselves to do when the WTO was started. Developing countries were trying to take advantage of these negotiations to rebalance new agreements in their favour. As we show in this section, these combined objectives of increased trade liberalisation and new North-South balance in a changing economic environment met with numerous obstacles, which explain the eventual failure of the negotiations.

Contradictions between historic capitalisms and emerging capitalisms

As we showed in the previous section, the world and the international balance of power have radically changed over the last two decades. At the beginning of the 1990s, when the Marrakech Agreements were being negotiated (no more multilateral trade agreements have been signed since then), the US and Europe just had to agree between the two of them and the rest of the world would follow and sign international trade agreements. This is exactly what happened (at it had been the case since the creation on GATT), when the two main economic powers of that time reached an agreement at Blair House (end 1992) to end their conflict on agriculture and paved the way to the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round two years later. As mentioned before, China had not accessed GATT/WTO yet (it happened in 2001) and nor Russia (2012). These two powers rank now (2012) first and eighth at the world level for exports of goods.

This *modus operandi* is no longer possible, now that these new players have now accessed WTO (China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, etc.), knowing that other big emerging countries (Brazil, India, etc.) have also decided to play a more prominent role. It is all the more difficult to find an agreement between these countries and industrialized countries as their objectives are different, because they have different comparative advantages (agriculture, manufacturing, services), a different growth model and development level.

A major difficulty met by the multilateral trade framework concerns the difficulty to regulate a trading system where some very heterogeneous economic and development models coexist. To make it simple, one can define industrialized countries (or OECD countries) as capitalist economies with low demographic growth and low saving rates; but China and Vietnam for example have economies which qualify themselves as “socialist market economies” (which is also the case of India which is a market economy). In spite of their

demographic transition, these countries have strong saving rates because of their demographic structure and still low dependency ratios, which is one of the causes of current trade and financial imbalances. They are also often opposed to further economic liberalisation due to their economic and political situation. Let us not forget that China and Vietnam are among the last countries worldwide to keep adopting and implementing five-year economic plans.

To sum it up, even if these countries have adopted market economy principles and have accessed WTO, government policies and companies keep playing an important role in the economy. This is the reason why China and Vietnam have accessed WTO as “Non Market Economies”. This specific status allows other member countries to protect their market better against Chinese and Vietnamese products, and especially to implement antidumping measures almost at their will against these products.

The conflict on services at WTO can partly be explained by these differences. On the one hand, the USA – which is the first world exporter of services – plays a very active role and seeks an improved access to international markets. On the other hand, big emerging countries (Brazil, China and India especially) fear the opening of their market, which would make their national champions compete with American multinationals. The difficulty for China to sign the plurilateral agreement on public procurement, which the USA is pressing, can be explained by the same reasons.

Obstacles to include development in the Doha Round

Over the last few decades, developing countries conducted active trade liberalisation policies, which went together (contrary to standard economic theory) with diverging trends between developing and developed countries’ growth paths (with a few exceptions such as China and a few emerging Asian countries). Special and differential treatment (SDT) granted within GATT tried to compensate development levels asymmetries and to reduce this divergence. But the single undertaking has forced all countries into a “one size fits all” model, whatever their development level, thereby strongly reducing or even abandoning SDT. Meanwhile, trade preferences granted to developing countries on a unilateral basis have been eroded by the multilateral liberalisation process.

Linking globalisation and development means making trade agreements more development friendly. It requires an increased SDT reversing the WTO agreements of 1994, which must be accepted by industrialized countries facing acute economic difficulties following the world financial crisis. According to Baghwati and Sutherland (2011): “this assumption – that a development friendly trade deal must demand less of countries in a way that is proportionate to their state of development – permeates the Doha Round and the final package will rightly have to be measured against it”.

On the one hand, the Doha Round (also entitled “Development Round”) included asymmetric commitments between developed and developing countries concerning the depth of tariff reductions and of reductions in agricultural subsidies (and potentially for the use of safeguard measures). For all developing countries, and especially for Least Developed Countries (cotton), removing distortions to trade caused by European and American agricultural subsidies was also a major issue, as these subsidies tend to push world prices of these products downward. But developing countries should still have been allowed some sort of agricultural subsidies.

On the other hand, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) were totally exempted from tariff reductions in the Doha Round (“Round for free”). The rationale was to compensate for the fact that LDCs are widely considered to be the main losers for the Marrakech agreements, but they would also have been from the Doha Round, as far as tariff reductions are concerned (especially through the erosion of trade preferences). In order to go further, LDCs should be granted a duty free access to the OECD markets, which was planned in the negotiations[3].

The international crisis which started in 2008 obviously made more difficult any flexibility from industrialized countries towards developing countries, at a time when employment

losses put in question free trade and the impact of imports from developing countries. The veto put by the US on any reduction on agricultural subsidies should be understood in this context.

One of the main problems raised by this new approach (or, should we say by the return to the traditional approach) is also due to the increasing differentiation between developing countries. This problem is now becoming very acute as China has become the first world exporter and as other big emerging countries are becoming major players in world trade. How could we keep granting them the same preferences and derogations as to smaller or less developed countries? This is one of the main difficulties met by multilateral trade negotiations, knowing that big emerging countries refuse any differentiation between developing countries, which would reduce their benefits. This difficulty is also met in other multilateral negotiations such as the ones on climate and environment.

Difficulties to negotiate increased trade liberalization

The WTO has changed the rule of the game for trade negotiations, by creating a set of multilateral trade rules, which all member countries have to apply. Indeed, during the second half of the twentieth century since the start of GATT, agreements were signed “à la carte” by voluntary countries while increased market access benefitted everybody, whether they signed the agreements or not, thanks to the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) clause. By adopting a single undertaking approach, WTO obliges now all member countries to sign one single global agreement. At the same time, the WTO extends the scope of trade negotiations beyond industrial products. It covers all products (agricultural and industrial) and services, which are now potentially subject to trade liberalisation. With this extended scope and with the new Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU), the WTO is now involved in defining national norms and regulations (e.g. imposing reform of investment laws, prohibiting export and production subsidies, etc.). This increased WTO power interferes with sovereignty of countries and reduces the leeway of government policies.

This new ambition and power of the WTO has a drawback: WTO agreements have deeper implications and are therefore more difficult to obtain than before in the GATT framework, especially because of “single undertaking” and of the bargaining process where all commitments require reciprocity from one another, whether in the same area or elsewhere. Furthermore, as the WTO is now almost universal (more than 150 members), it is almost impossible to come to a consensus on a global agreement respecting the previously mentioned principles. This is why for services, which were the main focus of the Doha Round for industrialized countries, no formal reciprocity had been required and member countries only provided a list of qualitative commitments. The weakness of this alternative approach was that it did not provide many incentives for ambitious commitments.

Another major problem is due to the players within the WTO and the trading system. In the WTO, the governments are negotiating on behalf of their national companies which they represent. This is consistent with the principles of international political economy as set out by Strange (Stopford *et al.*, 1991): international competition is not only between companies, but also between governments who defend the interests of their home companies. But, as underlined by Deblock (2010), this characteristic implies that rules and trade disciplines apply first to governments and to a lesser extent to companies. This is the reason why only governments can be prosecuted by the WTO's Dispute Settlement Understanding and not companies. Competition rules and policies are a good example of this focus: competition policies only apply at the national level and there is no international co-operation in this field.

Overall, there is an obvious contradiction between the continuous extension of the scope of the market and the narrow scope concerning trade rules, and therefore of trade distortions. The latter are essentially defined as discriminations towards foreign enterprises (= violation of national treatment) and between enterprises of different country origins (= violation of the MFN clause). In fact, the WTO mostly has an objective of trade liberalisation (free trade) and not of trade regulation.

All in all, WTO has not managed to make the multilateral trade framework move ahead since it was established more than 20 years ago (beyond a few plurilateral agreements signed on a voluntary basis, such as the previously mentioned ITA). WTO has not managed either to redress unbalances resulting from the Marrakech Agreements. As WTO is “member driven” (its members negotiate and decide and the WTO then applies the agreements), this deadlock is due to the lack of motivation of its members and to the disagreements between them.

We have therefore all the ingredients for a major legitimacy crisis of the WTO and international trade governance.[4] Far from mitigating since the end of the 1990s (see the Seattle Conference in 1999), this crisis kept deepening during the 2000s and at the beginning of the 2010s. Whatever the disagreements and diverging interests between WTO members, the only way to solve this crisis is to enlarge its missions (or to replace it with another organisation with enlarged missions) and to articulate trade governance with international economic governance. As we show in the following section, the question is not so much to limit the scope of international trade norms, than to better define their contents and their interconnection with other norms.

3. The need to widen the scope of trade governance

Even if the WTO survives the failure of the Doha Round and if some of the anti-globalisation organisations which want to close it down do not succeed, the need for reform has become stronger. But this question should be replaced in a more general debate around the reform of the architecture of the economic and financial world governance. Indeed, the world economic crisis has both deepened the legitimacy crisis of the international institutions in charge of world economic governance (mainly WTO, IMF and World Bank) and called for reinforcement of these institutions. Up to now, a “new Bretton Woods” which was talked about at the beginning of the crisis has not taken place, but the need for it is as acute as ever[5].

In this section, we analyse the challenges of reforming the international economic institutions, limiting ourselves to the interactions between a “bigger” WTO, the United Nations and other international institutions such as the IMF.[6] We promote an enlargement of the missions of the WTO, which should also be fully integrated into the UN system and explicitly link trade and human development. Following Mattoo and Subramanian (2009), we also suggest three areas which deserve a better articulation with trade: finance; energy and environment.

Trade and human development

The main objective of WTO is to promote free trade. According to article 1 of the WTO Agreement, member countries consider that “their relations in the field of trade and economic endeavour should be conducted with a view to raising standards of living, ensuring full employment and a large and steadily growing volume of real income and effective demand, and expanding the production of and trade in goods and services”. (WTO, 1994) This mission is more restricted than the one which was assigned to the International Trade Organisation by the Havana Charter. The latter also referred to the objective of expanding production and trade, but also included a wider objective of “realizing the aims set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, particularly the attainment of the higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development (. . .)” (United Nations, 1948).

The improvement of wages and working conditions (“as productivity may permit”) was a central objective of the Havana Charter, which fully acknowledged interaction between trade and labour standards in the name of “fair trade”. This implied strong collaboration with the International Labour Organisation, an objective which has completely disappeared in the WTO (partly because of the developing countries themselves which feared the adoption of a “social clause”). This reduction of scope also results from a change in the regulation of industrialized countries, from “fordism” to “liberalism”. In this new model, free trade pushes

direct and indirect wage costs downwards (at least for unskilled workers) and the objective of full employment has completely disappeared. Some initiatives have been launched to co-operate with other international organisations: with the International Labour Organisation on the link between trade and employment; with UNCTAD and others on “Aid for Trade”, etc. But these initiatives have not fundamentally changed the way the WTO conducts business.

In the WTO articles, the reference to the UN Charter has also disappeared. This means first that WTO has been designed as an international organisation out of the UN system. Even the Bretton Woods Institutions (World Bank and IMF) which are largely independent from the UN refer to the UN Charter. This makes the WTO the only major international organisation which does not refer to the UN principles. This especially implies that the WTO does neither comply with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights nor with the UN Declaration of Economic and Social Rights. As Supiot (2010) underlines it, this corresponds to placing the market first before all other general objectives of human development (even if the objective of full employment and increasing standards of living is formally mentioned in article 1).

This regression is particularly obvious concerning the interest for development. The Havana Charter was very ambitious in this respect as it was assigned the objective “to foster and assist industrial and general economic development, particularly of those countries which are still in the early stages of industrial development”. The WTO is much more modest as it only aims to “secure a share in the growth in international trade commensurate with the needs of their economic development”. As mentioned before, the Marrakech Agreements are very biased against developing countries, which is consistent with this lack of interest for development. The Doha Development Agenda was precisely supposed to include development in the WTO, but its failure confirms that a more ambitious reform is needed including changing the status of this international organisation. To sum it up, the only way to solve the legitimacy crisis of WTO and to reinforce the power of this organisation is to enlarge its scope while including it more narrowly in the United Nations system. A reform of its governance should take place simultaneously, in order to increase the voice of developing countries.

Linking trade and finance

“Inappropriate” levels of exchange rates are considered to be among the main economic distortions affecting international trade. However, as mentioned previously, it is surprising that the WTO focuses on tariffs which increase the price of imported products, whereas sometimes the question would rather be to correct undervalued exchange rates. For historical reasons, the IMF is supposed to be the only one in charge of monitoring exchange rates but this mission is only partly fulfilled. To take again the example of the supposed undervaluation of the Chinese Yuan, the fact that the WTO has no right to discuss this source of distortion is a real problem, if we consider the huge growth of Chinese exports over the last few years. Up to now, only unilateral measures have been discussed such as “anti-dumping” measures which are supposed to be used for other purposes. Better coordination in this field would be huge progress as far as the regulation of the world economy is concerned. It could be supported by the WTO Dispute Settlement system, using the comparative advantages of each organisation.

More generally, linking financial liberalisation and the WTO raises a problem of global governance: the international crisis confirmed the danger of liberalisation of finance without proper regulation. After this major crisis (which is not over yet), there exists an obvious contradiction between keeping liberalizing finance at the WTO within GATS and the necessary reinforcement of international financial regulation. This especially calls for increased coordination between WTO, IMF, IBS and IFB.

Last of all, there is the ongoing debate on regulation foreign direct investment (FDI). According to the World Bank (2011), the objective should be to reduce the confusion raised by the proliferation of bilateral investment agreements: “time is ripe to move ahead with the establishment of a multilateral framework for managing crossborder investment flows”. The same report promotes establishing a multilateral investment organisation modelled on the WTO: “The existence of a formal multilateral institution – a world investment organisation

analogous to the World Trade Organisation – may also be an important step forward, especially if such a multilateral forum enhances access by developing countries, especially Low Income Countries, to global investment capital”.

Trade and environment

The WTO has no formal mandate to deal with the environment. However, the preamble of the WTO agreement establishing the organisation states that “. . . relations in the field of trade and economic endeavour should be conducted with a view to (. . .) expanding the production of and trade in goods and services, while allowing for the optimal use of the world’s resources in accordance with the objective of sustainable development, seeking both to protect and preserve the environment”. The preamble also refers to the Rio Declaration on environment and development (1992).

Referring to this preamble, several decisions made by the DSU have started designing common law in this field. These decisions were made following complaints by member countries against other countries restricting imports for environmental reasons (shrimp/tortoise case USA vs Thailand; tires Brazil vs EU, etc.).

Because there is no International Environment Organisation, there is a risk that big countries might use trade sanctions for protectionist purposes in order to restrict imports from developing countries. The same worry has been expressed by developing countries concerning the introduction into the WTO of other subjects such as social standards (the so-called “social clause”). In fact, we agree with Mattoo and Subramanian that such sanctions should not aim at forcing countries to co-operate in this field but should be restricted to incentives to enforcement of international agreements on environment and climate change (the same proposal could be made concerning social standards adopted by ILO).

Viewing environment through a trade lens only (and the protection of environment as a derogation to multilateral law) leads to place trade norms above environmental norms. The Agenda 21 adopted at the Rio Earth Summit (1992) just before the establishment of WTO validates this primacy as it considers that: “The international economy should provide a supportive international climate for achieving environment and development goals by: Promoting sustainable development through trade liberalisation. . .” (Introduction 2.3; United Nations, 1992).

As underlined by Abbas (2012), considering that trade liberalisation contributes to environment protection is a very narrow approach of the main environmental challenges. The question is obviously not only to promote trade of equipment for saving energy or environment protection: international trade has a strong impact on environment and externalities which have to be taken into account (biodiversity; agricultural lands, CO2 emissions, etc.). The main objective here (as in other subjects) is therefore to interconnect trade and environmental norms, without systematically trade coming first above the rest. As it is the case for trade, having countries at very different development levels and having different collective preferences is a difficult challenge for environmental agreements, which requires an integrated approach, or at least to take into account interdependence between all these subjects.

Regulating the price of commodities

The Havana Charter (1947), which was supposed to define the mandate of the International Trade Organisation, proposed to improve trade regulation, with the objective to remove all sorts of distortions to trade (wage costs, price of commodities, etc.). Contrary to this, the WTO has no mission to regulate the price of commodities. This decision is mainly due to ideological reasons (the WTO is supposed to liberalize trade and not to regulate it). But one has to recognise that all the attempts to regulate the price of commodities for the last half century have failed (except for oil), which is both due to technical difficulties and to the opposition of the USA, who have achieved in making disappear all existing systems (see the example of coffee in the 1990 s). This lack of regulation increases the volatility of prices, and is detrimental to producers (often developing countries) and to consumers overall.

Following the world economic crisis, this need for regulation is more pressing, especially as far as food security is concerned. The important increase in food prices is mainly due to the bio-energy policies conducted in industrialized countries, according to a World Bank study quoted by Mattoo and Subramanian (2009). These policies tend to reduce the offer of food products for consumption. In the long term, economists anticipate high prices for food products because of several factors: high price of energy; slow productivity gains in agriculture; pressure on production because of climate change. In this context, trade policies (and the WTO) should play a major role.

In the case of oil where OPEC has been a huge success, the cartel tends to increase prices well over their competitive market price. This problem is very acute for the world economy as oil is both the main traded commodity and the one for which competition distortions are the highest due to the very powerful price control exerted by OPEC. Better regulation of the world oil markets and prices would require starting an international institution where producers and consumers would meet, or widening the mandate of WTO.

Beyond the technical aspects (“who should do what and how?”), the purpose of these reforms would be to enlarge the scope of the WTO (or of other organisations working in coordination with the WTO) which would not be restricted to trade liberalisation but which would include wider subjects connected to the regulation of international trade, working with the Bretton Woods institutions on these subjects. Of course, such an enlargement would require institutional reform, which is possible only in the long term, and could mean, as suggested by the Stiglitz Commission (United Nations, 2009), by Ocampo (2012) and many others, reinforcing the coordination role of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

4. Four macro-economic scenarios for international trade and trade liberalization

The four scenarios presented in this section correspond to different anticipated evolutions of the world economy and therefore of world trade. Four key issues distinguish these scenarios concerning the articulation of trade policies and the governance of world trade: the respective weight of governments and of international regulation versus markets; the balance between the industrialized and developing countries within the multilateral trading system; the possibility of reaching better coordination between countries at the world level or rather at the regional level; the size of international financial and trade imbalances, where the China/USA relationship plays a role which is not exclusive. In the analysis conducted here and except for the last scenario, the European Union does not play a major role in contributing to the probability of implementation of these different scenarios. Even more, it is projected to be a slow growth area (at least during all the 2010 s) following the Euro crisis, with bleak export growth prospects.

Reduced government

In this first scenario reduction of government spending is implemented. Also, the process of trade liberalisation goes on during the next decades (this also implies further financial liberalisation). We hypothesise that a new multilateral agreement is signed at the WTO in the next few years, which means going towards zero tariffs on most industrial goods which also means generalised free trade for these products and the conclusion of a long process started in the middle of the last century. The real remaining challenges concern agricultural products and services.

For agricultural products, further liberalisation (reduction of tariffs and removal of subsidies) mostly benefits developed countries and big emerging countries but increases the vulnerability of other developing countries. The main victim is the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which has already been profoundly reformed in 2005, anticipating an agreement within the Doha Round (Pouch, 2012). Further dismantling the CAP will reduce the European world market share for agricultural products even more, benefitting big emerging countries and the US (European agricultural trade surplus disappearing). The price increase due to trade liberalisation should be limited except for cotton where the

reduction of American subsidies and the production price increase will benefit African countries.

This option means that the WTO is going to potentially liberalize most services in the long term. In public services, this means implementing a generalised American model of “public utilities” with private capital controlled by a public regulator. This model progressively replaces the European model of public enterprises. In Europe, this process is largely advanced, but the question is to generalise it (health, education, etc.) and to make it universal through constraining multilateral commitments.

Following a liberal globalisation path will stimulate foreign direct investment with the perspective of signing a multilateral agreement on investment (which was refused by developing countries and by anti-globalisation protesters at the end of the 1990s). This investment surge will contribute to location shifts of global industries.

In this scenario, the WTO will limit itself to organising the trade liberalisation process and a smooth free trade respecting multilateral agreements, using the DSU. The private sector and multinational firms play a key role for designing norms which are then implemented at the international level by WTO, ensuring that trade norms overpower others.

This “universal Washington consensus” corresponds basically to following recent trends: for international trade. This scenario is considered as our baseline scenario, with projected market shares presented in the table at the beginning of this paper. As recalled before, this anticipates a continuing declining trend of the share of developed countries (especially EU, but also USA and Japan) in world trade going together with a growing share of developing countries (especially China and India). A reduction of international trade and financial imbalances (reduction of US debt especially) is also anticipated; no catching up by other developing countries is expected. Because, there are not any regulation mechanisms other than the market, this liberal scenario is the one with the highest systemic risks: economic and financial risks, but also for the environment and access to commodities.

China and US hegemony

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the “coupling” of the American and the Chinese economies has deepened, to the extent that this mutual interdependency has been coined “Chimerica” by Ferguson and Schularick (2007). The American bilateral trade deficit with China has become massive (it has decreased following the international crisis), while China has accumulated huge amounts of US Treasury bonds. These financial and trade unbalances have generated deep bilateral conflicts, with increased and repeated American pressure on China (exchange rates, anti-dumping measures, etc.). At the same time, both countries have launched efforts to reinforce bilateral co-operation in order to solve these conflicts.

Now that China has overtaken the US to become the first trade power and will soon also become the first economic power overall (in terms of GDP), it could become mutually beneficial for the two countries to make an alliance in order to manage the world economy. This scenario is based on the hypothesis of increased coordination between China and the USA (trade, finance, environment, etc.), who impose their leadership on other countries. In this scenario, government interventions are increased.

Concerning trade policies which are our main focus in this paper, this scenario is consistent with the current situation where the two major players at WTO are the USA and China. Their conflict went as far as having a major contribution to leading the Doha Round to a dead end. So we presume that the USA and China will remain the dominant players but also that they will come to an agreement of mutual benefit in the short to medium term. This situation could be justified by two major reasons:

1. First of all, the EU (which is the first world exporter, even excluding intra-EU trade) is rather taking a back seat in current debates, which reflects the difficulties encountered for designing European policies in general; because of lack of consensus between EU countries on shared objectives and principles, the EU is mainly taking a defensive stance

(on agriculture especially); European liberalization policies are therefore significantly unilateral, especially in the services sector without getting any reciprocity at WTO (Mazier, 2005a, b).

2. Second, the mercantilist (or “commercialist” according to Deblock, 2010) logic of WTO and not taking into account strategic alliances, it is normal that the two main world traders (apart from EU, see above) should be the two main players of multilateral negotiations as they are negotiating reciprocal opening of their markets.

This scenario corresponds to a contradictory process of further trade liberalization on the one hand and of progress of world regulation on the other hand: this better world regulation (dominated by the USA and China) implies improved monetary cooperation (reevaluation of the Yuan parity) as well as better regulation for energy (stabilization of oil prices) and a reduction of trade and financial imbalances (this reduction process has already started following the world crisis). The USA and China benefit from their joint hegemony, especially in terms of international trade: China almost doubles its share of world exports of goods and services by 2030 compared to 2010.

Regionalisation

While it is becoming increasingly difficult to adopt new global norms at the international level due to diverging objectives followed by the main players, globalisation of business and markets oblige national governments in each part of the world to undertake important new initiatives at the regional level in order to spur economic growth (Alphametrics, 2013). Our third scenario takes on the failure of the Doha Round. If there is no turn towards stronger government policies following this failure, one can expect a certain weakening of WTO in the next few years (if it is not reformed, which is the condition for reinforcing the influence of this organisation). Trade liberalisation and the growth of international trade can then go on, but at a regional level, following past trends described previously.

This process goes on with a reinforcement of regional trade agreements, which multiplied during the last decades, especially since the 1990 s. According to Baghwati and Sutherland (2011), “For the time being, the momentum is behind the RTA [Regional Trade Areas/NDA] solution”. Over the last two decades, most of trade liberalisation has indeed been observed not at the WTO but within regional and bilateral trade agreements. The main agreements signed since 1990 are: NAFTA (1994); Mercosur (1995); the Euromed agreements, which came into force from 1998 (with Tunisia), EU-Mexico free trade agreement (2000) and the ASEAN + China free trade agreement (2010).

As it is unable to prevent their mushrooming, the WTO could try to articulate regional agreements and to make them consistent between themselves and with WTO rules (regional agreements are currently a derogation). The major change concerning regional trade integration is that regional agreements are not so much about trade preferences anymore (especially as MFN tariffs have declined substantially), but increasingly about non tariff barriers and national regulations. These norms are adopted by participants to these agreements and then by other partners. Through this enlargement process, regional agreements contribute to designing new international norms which will then be adopted at the multilateral level.

Stronger regional integration implies better coordination of exchange rates at the regional level (Asia, Europe, etc.), which especially implies that the Euro zone will not disappear. It also implies higher trade performance (both exports and imports) for the European Union, the USA and China especially due to increased intra-regional trade. But no reduction in international imbalances will occur, as regional integration means reorientation of trade and financial flows but still basically the same growth model for the main economic players.

When looking at projects being negotiated, it is probable that regionalism does not only mean agreements between neighbor countries. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) discussed between the EU and the USA is emblematic. The signature of a Trans Pacific Partnership within APEC (The USA, Japan, China and other countries bordering the Pacific Ocean) would be an alternative to the Transatlantic agreement. This

vast free trade area would stimulate exports by China and BRICs of their value chains (Baghwati and Sutherland, 2011).

Multipolar cooperation

This fourth and last scenario of Multipolar co-operation is the opposite of the first one ("Reduced government"). Instead of extending liberalism at the world level with the resulting divergence between countries, we expect greater international convergence thanks to improved regulation of the world economy (especially for trade) and reinforced public policies. According to us, this is the best scenario, although it might not be the most realistic. Concerning trade issues, this implies an interruption of the trade liberalisation process from now on, but without an increase of tariffs or trade protections (no such protectionist back-turn has occurred even during the international crisis).

A reform of the WTO could go along a wider reform of international economic governance, within a "new Bretton Woods". The need for a reform of the WTO is increased by the failure of the Doha Round, which expresses the deadlock of "single undertaking", the opposition to further worldwide liberalisation for all products and the preference for adopting new regulations.

This "rosy" scenario corresponds to the highest anticipated economic and trade growth at the world level. A slower restructuring of the world trade is also anticipated, with better performance of developed countries and a slightly worse performance of developing countries (Asian countries especially). Two main trade issues relevant to this scenario should be solved:

1. Enlarging the scope of trade regulations (whether within the WTO or other *ad hoc* new international organizations); this covers better regulation of energy and commodities markets which will support better incomes for producer countries (this means that the oil price will remain controlled by OPEC with improving market mechanisms) and taking into account environmental issues; also needed is a better coordination between trade and exchange rate policies, which means joint work of WTO and IMF; last of all, taking into account the relationship between trade and environment (and potentially social standards).
2. Rebalancing the international trading system towards developing countries and human development implies increasing asymmetries at the WTO (SDT, etc.) and also balancing the DSU towards poor countries, which need to be able to lodge complaints and to see the decisions applied quickly (this means adopting financial sanctions for example);

This scenario also means an improvement of the international monetary system and a reduction of international trade and financial imbalances (including a rebalanced Chinese growth model). We anticipate stronger capital flows received by developing countries on the whole and, as in the previous scenario an increased role of the Yuan among international currencies, next to the dollar and euro. Increased regulation of the world economy and stronger cooperation policies will improve economic convergence between countries, and benefit low income countries which will posit faster economic growth. Better coordination on environmental issues is also expected leading to more environmentally friendly world growth (with less carbon emissions).

As we were already writing at the beginning of the 2000s when the Doha Round was launched (Benaroya and Cling, 2001), the European Union could play an important role with the view to implement this scenario. First, because its trade policy has been from the start a key pillar of European construction. Trade has been a way to integrate new members within the European Union and to promote institutional transformation. Second, the EU is in a privileged position to promote North-South co-operation, because of its location and because European trade and co-operation policies have always been intertwined. This is probably one of the main lessons drawn from our analysis: once the European economic and monetary crisis is over, the EU must have ambition as far as the international (especially trade) governance is concerned, otherwise it will become completely marginalized.

Conclusion

This paper analysed new forms of trade globalisation observed over the last few decades, which included fast growth of world trade going together with a deep geographic and sector restructuring and increased regionalisation, leading to a new international division of labour.

Our analysis also delved on the long standing crisis of the governance of world trade, which culminated with the failure of the Doha Round after ten years of multilateral negotiations. This failure reflects the contradictions borne from deepening globalisation: shift of the world economy towards Asia and relative weakening of the US and Europe; developing countries questioning the current trade governance established by industrialized countries; limitations of making the whole economy submitted to market rules, etc.

The paper eventually drew some perspectives for reform and solving the crisis of legitimacy of WTO, and connected them with different scenarios for the world economy. Although it would be more realistic to accept that it will probably be a mixed scenario which will be implemented, rather than one of these four simplified ones, this presentation has an obvious analytical advantage. We can draw an important lesson from these scenarios: although the main trends of restructuring of world trade are set to continue, especially the decline of developed countries and the growing weight of developing countries, policy options will influence these evolutions and will nuance these trends.

The international crisis which started in 2008 increased the questioning of the international economic architecture on the whole, although this has not provoked any substantive reform at the time of writing, apart from purely “cosmetic changes”. The longer the crisis, the more urgent a reform will become. Paradoxically, the crisis also makes reform more difficult to discuss and achieve, because the leeway for countries in crisis is very narrow. It is not a coincidence if all major advances in this respect have occurred after WW2 and were conducted by a dominant superpower. Indeed, the United Nations and the Bretton Woods were established in 1944 in such a context, and the WTO was largely modelled by the US. We are not in such a situation in any circumstances at the beginning of the 2010s, and this makes the design of a new international economic and trade governance slower and more difficult. Although the European Union is currently unable to influence this process (or even to define its position), it would weaken it further at the international level if it does not contribute to progress in this direction.

Notes

1. The European Union remains the first world exporter if we consider it as one country and exclude intra-EU trade.
2. These forecasts have been prepared using the CAM model for the EU AUGUR Project “Challenges for Europe in the world in 2030” (AUGUR, 2013). The original version of this paper has also been prepared for this project.
3. The European Union has been granting duty free access to LDCs since 2001 (“Everything but Arms” Initiative). However, in practice many products do not benefit from this duty free access. The same with the USA, who grant duty free access to LDCs subject to many restrictions (and excluding some of them).
4. The rules of international trade are fixed by the WTO. But these rules interact with many rules (or “norms”) fixed by other international agreements/organizations either concerning regional trade for example (see the European Commission, ALENA, etc.) or other subjects (environment, intellectual property, GMO, etc.).
5. Let’s remind the reader that the Bretton Woods Conference (1944) decided to create the IMF and the World Bank, as well as the International Trade Organization. The latter took 50 more years to start, due to the opposition of the United States who refused for several decades to put in place a powerful multilateral trading framework.
6. We do not address in this paper the question of the reform of the internal governance of WTO and of its decision making process. There have been very strong debates and numerous reports and studies on this subject since the 2000s (see especially Sutherland *et al.*, 2004; Dadush, 2009; Lamy, 2009). We believe that this question comes after the main question which is defining the missions of the WTO and its interaction with the United Nations system.

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