

Online appendix

Communication and Credibility in Multilateral Negotiations

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A1 Countries included

The list of countries was created on the basis of the share of world trade volume in 2012 of all WTO member states; the number of countries chosen was determined by the threshold of 90%. After the ex post exclusion of the recent accession states, the list comprises (ordered alphabetically according to their ISO alpha 3 code): the United Arab Emirates (ARE), Argentina (ARG), Australia (AUS), Austria (AUT), Belgium (BEL), Brazil (BRA), Canada (CAN), Switzerland (CHE) Chile (CHL), China (CHN), the Czech Republic (CZE), Germany (DEU), Denmark (DNK), Spain (ESP), Finland (FIN), France (FRA), the United Kingdom (GBR), Greece (GRC), Hong Kong (HKG), Hungary (HUN), Indonesia (IDN), India (IND), Ireland (IRL), Israel (ISR), Italy (ITA), Japan (JPN), Korea (KOR), Kuwait (KWT), Luxembourg (LUX), Mexico (MEX), Malaysia (MYS), the Netherlands (NLD), Norway (NOR), Poland (POL), Portugal (PRT), Singapore (SGP), Sweden (SWE), Thailand (THA), Turkey (TUR), the United States (USA), Venezuela (VEN), South Africa (ZAF), and the European Union (labelled in the dataset as EUU).

A2 Coding categories

The list of coded categories comprises: agriculture (agr); development (dev); environment (env); intellectual property rights (IPRs, coded as ipr), including both trade-related IPRs and geographical indications; LDCs' concerns (ldc); industrial goods (NAMA, coded as nam);

services (ser); the so-called Singapore issues primarily including, later in the negotiations, the trade-facilitation matters (sin); and social and labour issues (soc). Categories dev and ldc have been merged for the purpose of the calculation of the dispersion index, as they substantively partly overlap.

A3 Robustness checks

To further assess the empirical validity of my argument, I present the results of a number of robustness checks on the main analysis. In these robustness checks I use different measures of the variables used and different sample specifications. The results are reported in table A1, all are based on the re-running of the main negative binomial regression model (model 5 in table 1 in the body of the article) with a number of modifications.

First, I used two conservative modifications of the dependent variable. In the main analysis, I used coding that distinguishes three levels of signal strength, with the stronger signals weighted more heavily. To check that the results are not influenced by any possible sensitivity of the coding, I used two non-weighted measures. One is a simple binary measure where any coded signal receives weight 1. The other is the same, except that it only scores 1 for those statements that were coded with the two stronger categories. In other words, I disregard the weak signals (weight 1). Results for both analyses are substantively very similar and they correspond to the previous findings. In model 1, I report the results from the former model with all codes included and weighted equally. In comparison to the main negative binomial model from table 1 in the body of the article, only the dummy variable for BRIC countries and the dummy for EU membership lose significance.

Table A1: Robustness checks

	(1) Signalling (binary)	(2) Signalling	(3) Signalling	(4) Signalling	(5) Signalling					
Interest dispersion	-4.716*	(-2.12)	-8.425***	(-3.67)	-9.620**	(-3.04)	-9.482***	(-3.72)	-7.903*	(-2.42)
Polity score	0.118***	(4.74)	0.167***	(5.71)	0.132**	(2.93)	0.163***	(4.87)		
Human development index	-2.434*	(-2.20)	-2.158*	(-2.29)	-0.535	(-0.50)			-1.883	(-1.53)
GDP (ln)	0.294***	(4.35)	0.0772	(1.18)	0.177*	(2.52)	0.230**	(2.62)	0.195**	(2.85)
BRIC country	0.0977	(0.44)	0.669**	(3.10)	0.414	(1.38)	0.662'	(1.89)	0.435	(1.57)
EU member	-0.0888	(-0.45)			-0.365'	(-1.73)	-0.399'	(-1.66)	-0.412*	(-2.18)
Exports % of GDP (log)	-0.0290	(-0.17)	-0.0456	(-0.28)	-0.156	(-1.00)	-0.202	(-1.01)	-0.134	(-0.86)
Tariff overhang	0.00860	(1.04)	-0.00646	(-0.72)	0.0235	(1.47)	0.0101	(1.00)	0.00155	(0.19)
Agriculture % of exports	3.399***	(5.43)	4.047***	(4.21)	2.991***	(3.78)			3.024***	(4.24)
Industry % of exports	1.616**	(2.93)	2.670*	(2.48)	1.840**	(2.98)			1.579*	(2.47)
GDP per capita							-0.0000178*	(-2.14)		
Agriculture % of GDP							-0.0109	(-0.33)		
Industry % of GDP							0.0242*	(2.05)		
Auto/Ano/Democracy									1.045***	(3.41)
Constant	-3.217	(-1.43)	5.103*	(2.18)	2.561	(0.81)	1.530	(0.51)	0.190	(0.08)
Predicted vs. observed (Rho)	0.88		0.86		0.88		0.87		0.93	
Observations	43		25		41		43		43	

t statistics in parentheses

' $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Secondly, I re-ran the analysis with all EU member states excluded and represented by only one observation for the EU Commission. The dependent and independent variables are both based on the original coding of the EU statements, just as for any other country, but the control variables have been calculated as either sums or means of the included member state values. Model 2 shows that the results remain robust, although interpretation requires care as the sample size drops to 25.

Thirdly, I checked the impact of potential outliers by excluding China and Kuwait (model 3). The main results again remain stable

Fourthly, I implemented the main analysis with a number of alternative measures of the control variables. In particular, instead of the polity score I used a simpler democratic regime score with three values: 1 for autocracy, 2 for anocracy, and 3 for democracy, as distinguished in the Polity IV dataset. I also substituted the Human Development Index with GDP per capita as an alternative measure of a country's level of development. Finally, I used the share of areas of production in terms of a country's economic output as a measure of their importance, instead of their share in terms of exports. Models 4 and 5 report the results with these modifications implemented.

The main results are again consistent across all these specifications. Interest dispersion is significant and in all models the coefficients are close to those identified previously. Furthermore, the polity variable (or the democratic regime as an alternative) is always significant and points in the expected direction. Interestingly, when we use the share of negotiation areas in terms of a country's economic output – rather than in terms of exports – as a proxy for the substantive economic importance of the area, no effect is shown for industrial production. Excluding the individual EU member states – and including only the EU as a whole – does not substantively change the results. The same holds if we omit China and Kuwait from the analysis (both countries can be considered as outliers due to their very

low interest dispersion).