

Annex 1 – Template Dissertation Report EPS



Joint Dissertation Review

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| Name of the student: | Gabriel Capitolo |
| Title of the thesis: | Exploring the Variation in the Inclusion of Non-Trade Policy in EU External Trade Agreements |
| Reviewer: | Andrea C. Bianculli |

1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

(relevance of the research question, research objective, literature review):

The thesis looks into an interesting topic: the inclusion of non-trade policy issues (NTPOs) in trade agreements. Empirically, it focuses on the case of the EU and tries to assess what factors determine the inclusion of NTPOs in trade agreements. The research question is defined and presented in the introductory part of the paper and Gabriel makes a strong argument for the relevance of his research both in empirical and theoretical terms.

2. ANALYSIS

(methodology, argument, theoretical backing, appropriate work with sources):

The literature review is excellent. Gabriel has appropriately and critically selected all the works cited to assess the literature on trade and NTPOs, thus identifying a gap in the literature. Some of the concepts presented there are then used to analyse a number of trade agreements signed by the EU with different partners around the world. This is well argued. However, in my view, the analytical framework is not clearly explained. More specifically, while some factors are mentioned as influencing the inclusion of NTPOs in the presentation of the different cases studied, these should have been presented and explained in the analytical framework and then indicated how these variables or factors were operationalised to empirically examine the different trade agreements.

3. CONCLUSIONS

(persuasiveness, link between data and conclusions, achievement of research objectives):

The thesis shows that Gabriel is knowledgeable on the subject: NTPOs and trade agreements, and has created an interesting database. The data is largely based on this novel database, but further research and analysis would have made the connection between the data and the argument clearer and his contribution stronger.

4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE


(appropriate language, adherence to academic standards, citation style, layout):

The thesis is well structured, clearly organised and very well written. The writing flows smoothly and easily from one sentence and paragraph to another, making clear the relationships between ideas.

5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

(strong and weak point of the dissertation, other issues)

Overall, I think that the thesis deals with an interesting topic, which is also very relevant in academic and policy terms. It is clear that the academic literature has not explored this variation in terms of EU trade agreements and the inclusion of NTPOs. A clearer analytical and methodological approach would have strengthened the narrative and empirical analysis presented in the paper.

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| Grade (A-F) | 8 (B) |
| Date | Signature |
| 26 June 2024 |  |

Classification scheme

| Percentile | Prague | | Krakow | | Leiden | | Barcelona | |
|------------|----------|-------|--------|--------|---------|--------|-----------|--------|
| | 91-100 % | 8,5% | 5 | 6,7% | 8,5-10 | 5,3% | 9-10 | 5,5 % |
| B (81-90) | 81-90 % | 16,3% | 4,5 | 11,7% | 7,5-8,4 | 16,4% | 8-8,9 | 11,0 % |
| C (71-80) | 71-80 % | 16,3% | 4 | 20% | 6,5-7,4 | 36,2% | 7-7,9 | 18,4 % |
| D (61-70) | 61-70 % | 24% | 3,5 | 28,3% | | | 6-6,9 | 35,2 % |
| E (51-60) | 51-60 % | 34,9% | 3 | 33,4 % | 6-6,4 | 42,1 % | 5-5,9 | 30,1 % |

Assessment criteria:

Excellent (A): 'Outstanding performance with only minor errors';
 Very good (B): 'Above the average standard but with some errors';
 Good (C): 'Generally sound work but with a number of notable errors';
 Satisfactory (D): 'Fair but with significant shortcomings';
 Sufficient (E): 'Performance meets the minimum criteria';
 Fail: 'Some/considerable more work required before the credit can be awarded'.