Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)

Note: Piermartini and Budetta (2009) provide a coding scheme for TBT provisions. They code for a total of 47 variables, distinguishing among standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment and between mutual recognition and harmonization. However, on quite a few of these variables they hardly find any variation across their agreements. For example, across the 64 agreements that they consider, they only find a significant number of mutual recognition provisions with respect to conformity assessment.

There is an overlap of 60 agreements between this respective database and the Piermartini and Budetta database. Intercoder reliability for our variable TBTWTO is 88 percent. Checks of the deviant cases largely confirmed our initial coding.

[tbt_prov] Does the agreement contain a TBT chapter or provision(s)?

0	No
1	Yes

[tbt_wto] Does the agreement contain a reference to the WTO Agreement on TBTs (the GATT Standards code)?

0	No
1	Yes

[tbt_coop] Does the agreement call for cooperation and information exchange on TBTs?

0	No
1	Yes

[tbt_distort] Does the agreement contain a requirement for standards to be least trade-distorting?

0	No
1	Yes

Explanation: This is only coded 1 if there is a specific requirement for standards to be least trade-distorting. A general reference to the objective of facilitating trade is not sufficient. Even if coded 0, the agreement may include in another part a provision prohibiting non-tariff barriers, which could have an effect on this part of the agreement.

[tbt_dispute] Does the agreement contain a dispute settlement provision for TBTs?

0	No
1	Yes

Explanation: Coded 1 even if only mentioned that disputes in this field should be dealt with by the agreement's joint committee.

[tbt_intstand] Does the agreement encourage the use of international standards?

0	No
1	Yes

Explanation: International here refers to both regional and global.

[**tbt_harmon**] Does the agreement contain provisions that stipulate the (partial) harmonization of TBT?

0	No
1	Harmonization as a general aim
2	Selective harmonization for specific sectors
3	Full harmonization

Explanation: We coded 1 if the agreement stipulates the aim of harmonization with international rules. Full harmonization is hardly written down. We coded 3 for some EU agreements with potential accession countries.

Bibliography

Piermartini, Roberta and Michele Budetta (2009). "A Mapping of Regional Rules on Technical Barriers to Trade", in Antoni Estevadeordal, Robert Teh, and Kati Suominen (eds) *Regional Rules in the Global Trading System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).