

ABSTRACT

Small States and Policy Space in Global Trade Politics: An Examination of how Small Upper-Middle to High-Income Developing Countries Respond to Policy Space Constraints at the WTO

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Since the inception of the World Trade Organization (WTO), there has been growing concern on the part of heterodox thinkers that the organization's regulations erode the room afforded to developing countries to implement interventionist, strategic industrial policies necessary for industrial development. Their orthodox counterparts, by contrast, have generally dismissed the perceived negative implications of binding policy space constraints on developing countries caused by the WTO. In both formulations, the concept itself is frequently left insufficiently problematized. This dissertation offers a more nuanced academic interrogation of the concept by going beyond the orthodoxy that ignores it, and the heterodoxy which sees it as overwhelmingly material, technical and constrictive. The main finding is that policy space is not a concept that can be simply reduced to technical and material concerns. Neither does it affect all developing countries equally. Furthermore, there is not one type of policy space, but multiple. The study identifies and conceptualizes three.

Keywords: policy space; industrial development; global trade politics; WTO; developing countries; small states.