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The Economics of Trade Facilitation

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Je dédie cette thèse à mon père
To my dad

Abstract

This dissertation explores the narrow dimensions of trade facilitation and their impact on trade. In the first part, I describe the various ways to measure trade facilitation. I explore the traditional indicators of trade facilitation as well as some specific surveys. I indicate several limitations of these commonly used indicators. I also review the role of international arrangements linked to trade facilitation which are rarely taken into account in related studies. Then, I build a composite indicator of trade facilitation which covers various narrow dimensions. It follows the WTO negotiations framework and draws on ninety nine variables. I show that several disparities remain across OECD countries and that information availability, advance rulings and formalities have an important impact on trade. In the second part, I review various trade facilitation dimensions across the World and particularly the European Union. It reveals several disparities and indicates the need to expand the TFIs to a wider set of countries. The European case study suggests that potential gains remain even in developed countries who share -similar- regulations. It underlines not only some implementation issues but also a path to follow to improve trade facilitation policies. Finally, I provide several insights on the methodology of EU trade facilitation performance.

Résumé

Cette thèse explore les dimensions spécifiques de la facilitation des échanges et leurs impacts sur le commerce. Dans une première partie, j'étudie les différentes façons de mesurer la facilitation des échanges. Je reviens sur les indicateurs traditionnellement utilisés, ainsi que sur une série d'études de cas. J'explique les nombreuses limitations à leur utilisation. Je regarde également le rôle joué par les accords internationaux et les conventions qui incluent de plus en plus de chapitres relatifs à la facilitation des échanges, ces derniers étant rarement pris en compte par la littérature. Constatant la nécessité de recourir à des indicateurs plus désagrégés, je construis un indicateur composite de la facilitation des échanges, couvrant plusieurs dimensions et constitué de 99 variables. Ces indicateurs suivent les négociations à l'OMC sur la facilitation des échanges. Je démontre qu'il subsiste de nombreuses disparités à travers les pays membres de l'OCDE, ainsi que l'accessibilité à l'information, les renseignements tarifaires contraignants et les formalités douanières ont un impact positif important sur le commerce. Dans une seconde partie, j'étends mon analyse au reste du monde et particulièrement à l'Union Européenne. Il apparaît que les disparités sont plus grandes à l'échelle mondiale et couvrent différents aspects. Ces résultats démontrent également l'intérêt de l'extension des indicateurs construits précédemment aux pays en développement. Enfin, l'étude de cas sur l'Union Européenne suggère qu'il reste des gains potentiels même dans des pays développés ayant pourtant un environnement réglementaire proche, voire identique. Cette étude souligne aussi que malgré les difficultés de mise en place de telles politiques, il existe un chemin vertueux conduisant à un système efficace des échanges, à travers l'intensification des initiatives développant la coopération entre tous les acteurs ainsi que le recours actif aux nouvelles technologies. Finalement, je propose plusieurs idées afin de mesurer la performance européenne en matière de facilitation des échanges.

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