

Annex 1 – Template Dissertation Report EPS



Joint Dissertation Review

Name of the student:	Ruben Sansom
Title of the thesis:	Balancing the Good and the Bad of the EU-Led Liberalisation of the Public Sector: The case of cross-border passenger railway services in the European Union
Reviewer:	Dr Matthew Broad, Leiden University

1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

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

The introduction to this impressive thesis provided a very clear route into the topic and made a commendable attempt to identify a gap in scholarship. There were admittedly a few moments in the opening paragraphs where the argument was a little repetitive – this was similarly true for the first section of the literature review covering pp. 4–6. The research question was nevertheless well contextualised and the rationale behind it robust, with the hypotheses emerging logically and organically from the literature.

2. ANALYSIS

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

The research design was sensible and delineated with confidence. One could well argue that this ought to have been more rigorous in linking the hypotheses with how each individually was going to be tested: the design was somewhat generic in this regard, if ultimately well informed. There might similarly have been greater reflection on the sources of the data (the relevant appendix wasn't especially instructive) as well as the mechanism used to deduce levels of liberalisation rather than their mere ranking. But this was otherwise very good.

3. CONCLUSIONS

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

The consulted data was deployed with awe-inspiring ease, all neatly presented and convincing. The hypotheses admittedly got a little lost: these weren't referred to again until p. 24, when some of the discussion risked feeding into the positive/negative dichotomy which had been so markedly criticised in earlier sections of the piece. The overall conclusion – that liberalisation tends to be positive but that its impact is context-dependent – was however sound.

4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE

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

Scholarly apparatus was perfect and structurally the thesis was expertly presented (although did this need a contents page?).

5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

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

This was an informed judgement of high calibre. Leaving aside those few moments of repetition and underdevelopment, the was a convincing piece which more than succeeded in justifying the question and approach and presenting and discussing with conviction the evidence collected. Well done.

Grade (A-F)	A (suggested grade - 9.0)
Date	Signature
21/06/2022	