



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

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Title: Negative Implications of the Commodification of Externalities in Global Capitalism: Case of Waste Management

Programme/year: MAIN/2023

Author of Evaluation (second reader): Jakub Tesař, Ph.D.

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	7
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	20
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	20
<i>Total</i>		80	47
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	9
	Style	5	3
	Formal requirements	5	4
<i>Total</i>		20	16
TOTAL		100	63



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The submitted thesis focuses on the topic of international trade with waste, especially e-waste and hazardous waste. It aims to explore the impacts of commodification of waste on the importing countries, namely the social and environmental externalities.

The focus on commodification of waste is potentially original. The literature on the commodification of nature is advanced, but similar accounts on commodification of waste are missing. However, while the selected framework fits well the first question, its use for the second is not trivial. The concept of “externalities” has been widely criticized as inappropriate (as there is nothing external to these phenomena), which applies even strongly for waste. Similarly, Polanyi’s moral argument applies directly to the former, but not to the later. I would be interested to hear more about how waste is an externality and what are the added risks of trading the material which already entered the market once.

The thesis somehow lacks in coherence, the theoretical framework is not directly connected to the analysis. The literature review discusses globalization and commodification but does not expand on how these ideas apply to waste. When discussing the details of the waste trade regime, I especially miss reflection on Bamako ban, or the whole discussion on Pollution havens (mentioned once in the conclusion, but without closer inspection).

A major issue of the submitted text is a deeper elaboration of the methodology. The author uses single case study analyzing the pattern of international trade with (mainly) e-waste. But it is not clear how the case was selected, and how its inspection relates to more general phenomena (can we say something about commodification of waste if we know something about commodification of e-waste now?). Moreover, the author does not specify how it the case studied, what aspects/sources are considered and why.

The thesis could be clearer with respect to the concepts being used. It regularly mixes up concepts like center/West/Global North (which is problematic as countries like China, Russias, and Turkey, which all play a key role in international trade with waste, would probably fall into different categories). Similarly, the thesis does not distinguish between pollution and climate change, nor reflect the differences between the hazardous waste and e-waste (if the study aimed to focus on hazardous waste, how is it possible to without biohazard or nuclear waste)?



Minor criteria:

The structure of the thesis is unusual, Introduction, Methodology and Conclusions should be regular chapters of the thesis. The list of figures and tables at the end is confusingly referred to as list of appendices. The text contains some irrelevant parts, not directly connected to the topic (paragraph on ODA, p.9, oil production, p. 14, globalization, p. 29). The text would benefit from the use of signposting language as the reader is often lost in how a given subsection contribute to the whole argument.

The thesis is written in the language which is often hard to follow. It features a high number of grammatical and syntax errors. The work with references is appropriate for the master level, with minor issues in the bibliographic entries.

Assessment of plagiarism:

The plagiarism check has not revealed substantial overlap with existing sources which would not be acknowledged with references.

Overall evaluation:

The submitted thesis review an important topic of current IR. The author shows a deep understanding of the topic and provide a good overview of the existing problem (international trade with waste and social and environmental consequences it bears). Without a more detailed methodology, the thesis offers a description of the topic rather than directly answering the promising research question.

Suggested questions for the defense:

- According to the thesis, the “externalities originate when subject’s activities cause an unintentional effect on another actor” (p. 12). Are the externalities necessarily unintentional? How would you classify the effects that are very much intentional (e.g., large amount of carbon emission released from an industry in 2023 when the “external” effect is known in detail), it is not an externality?
- How relevant is the concept of externalities per se? What is “external” to economic production if we talk about waste?

Suggested grade: D

Signature: