

Adjudicative and Diplomatic WTO Panels

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Abstract

This research note quantifies and identifies changes in the characteristics of World Trade Organization (WTO) panel reports. It has been suggested that the suspension of the Appellate Body (AB) may have encouraged panels to adopt a more political or diplomatic tone, departing from an adjudicative style. The empirical analysis reveals the changes in panel reports: the suspension of the AB has had an immediate effect in reducing report length and, over time, has resulted in fewer citations and weaker sentiment strength. These findings indicate that panels have modified their rhetorical strategies accordingly.

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