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**GOING BY THE BOOK: WHAT INTERNATIONAL TRADE LAWYERS ARE NOT
ALLOWED TO KNOW**

**Ana Luísa Bernardino
International Law, Graduate Institute of International and development Studies, Geneva,
Switzerland**

This paper aims to study a handful of international trade law textbooks in order to discern what those books teach international trade lawyers not to know, to forget, or to dismiss.

Textbooks are taken to represent undisputed and uncontroverted knowledge any given field. By telling us what to think about, and what the questions and topics ‘of relevance’ to trade law are, they also inevitably determine the things we do not think about, ensuring that trade lawyers share not only the same grammar but also, and perhaps more importantly, the same ignorance or unawareness. As such, they provide an ideal (and hitherto largely untheorized) object of examination to explore what international trade lawyers as a community are socialized into disattending.

In sum, this paper treats textbooks as invisible frames of broader processes of discursive disciplinary socialization and turns the focus to the ‘out-of-frame’ activity that is not commonly accounted for. The silences, exclusions and repressions in textbooks allow us to highlight the things that trade lawyers need to ignore in order to know what they do. The purpose of the paper is not to provide an errata for major international trade law textbooks, for selectivity is an inescapable feature of cognition, and no textbook could ever cover all aspects of a given phenomenon, but rather to show how certain omissions constitute conditions of possibility for the current discourse on international trade law.