



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Riddhi Anand

Title: The Immigration Policies of the EU Member States: Adaptation in Relation to the Refugee Crisis

Programme/year: Master in International Relations

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/external assessor): supervisor – Jan Karlas

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	25
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	30
<i>Total</i>		80	65
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	5
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	15
TOTAL		100	80



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The thesis focuses on an important question: how the immigration policies of EU member states were evolving during and in the wake of the migration crisis. The overall focus of the thesis is explained relatively well in the introduction. The thesis understands the migration crisis only as a background condition that might initiate the changes in the immigration policies. It concentrates more on domestic politics and seeks to analyze whether and how changing domestic interests might have led (in response to the immigration crisis) to changes in national policies.

It is necessary to appreciate that the thesis submits a literature review at the outset of the analysis. The author uses this review to show that the intention of the thesis is rather original as there is no study that would explicitly explore the effects of domestic conditions on the recent changes in the immigration policies of EU member states.

To develop the potential link between domestic interests and immigration policies, the thesis draws on the liberal theory of international politics (the reformulation by Andrew Moravcsik). The author grasped this theoretical perspective quite well. One might think critically about the fact that theoretically the thesis is built solely on Moravcsik's reformulation and does not broaden the framework by other sympathetic or alternative authors. But that is perhaps fine for an MA thesis. The author employs the liberal theory to construct a pair of two consecutive hypotheses: first, the increasing number of immigrants should increase the negative perception in the public opinion, and then this should be reflected by more negative stances in state policies. It needs to be noted that the first hypothesis is not in contradiction with the theory, but it also does not explicitly flow from it.

In methodological terms, the thesis conducts a series of four case studies. These studies focus on the following four countries: Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, and Sweden. The selection is well justified by pointing to the different characteristics of the selected states. One problem is that the author declares that she uses a process-tracing. But to a high extent, she does not because process-tracing investigates causal mechanisms. This is something not truly offered in the empirical part of the thesis. Instead, the analysis looks at correlations (between the number of migrants and the public opinion and then between the public opinion and national policies).



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As for the empirical parts, the virtue is that the author sticks to the selected question and applies the theoretical framework. The downside is that the amount of the empirical work that was done is not particularly large. The case studies are relatively short. Moreover, in each of them the author outlines the basic attitudes in the public opinion at the beginning and then shortly describes the changes in the policies. The number of sources used is not very high and the analysis does not reach a very deep level. At the same time, the link between the changes in the public opinion and the changes in national policies might look obvious, but it is not always substantiated. That said, the author managed to analyze the issues that she intended to analyze and provides concrete findings. It is also necessary to appreciate that she differentiates to what extent the two hypotheses work in the cases and why.

Sometimes, there is also a problem with the support of observations by sources. For example, on p. 28 in connection with the Swedish case the author argues that “while the public opinion did not change negatively towards the idea of immigration as a whole, it changed from being acceptant of newer applicants to closing its borders and focusing instead on better integration models of the ones already accepted.” However, no reference is provided, so it is difficult to judge what substantiates this claim. Similarly on p. 31 the author claims that “In relation to a high number of asylum applicants, Italy had a noticeable change in public opinion and also the political environment of the country with more politicians pushing for an equal burden sharing among all States of the EU and an increasing anti-immigration sentiment.” But the change in the public opinion is not documented.

Minor criteria:

No comments

Overall evaluation:

The thesis addresses a clear and interesting issue. The virtues of the thesis are: a concentrated focus, use of a conceptual and theoretical framework, the thesis is also very well structured and written comprehensively. The drawbacks lie mainly in the case studies. The amount of the empirical work that was done is not particularly large and case studies are, to some extent, rather shallow. Sometimes, factual claims are not supported with references. Overall, the thesis only partly manages to show that the changes in the policies reacted to the shifts in the public opinion (even though it is in general obvious that they did).



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Suggested grade:

B

Signature: