



Posudek na diplomovou práci

Autor/ka práce: Tereza Nečasová

Název práce: Criteria of selection of the European Commissioners

Obor/Rok: Mezinárodní vztahy, 2020/2021

Autor posudku (vedoucí): Jan Karlas

Kritéria	Definice	Max. bodů	Získané body
Hlavní kritéria			
	Výzkumná otázka, formulace problému	10	10
	Teoretický konceptuální rámec	30	25
	Metodologie, analýza argumentace	40	30
<i>Celkem</i>		80	65
Vedlejší kritéria			
	Zdroje	10	10
	Styl	5	5
	Formální kritéria	5	5
<i>Celkem</i>		20	20
CELKEM		100	85



Slovní hodnocení:

Hlavní kritéria:

Poznámka: Vzhledem k tomu, že jsem posudek na tuto práci již zpracovával pro Univerzitu Kostnice, tak zde přikládám jeho původní znění v angličtině.

This thesis deals with an interesting question of the selection criteria of the members of the European Commission. The Commission is supposed to deal with the issues from the European perspective and to involve the most qualified personalities. At the same time, the Commissioners are still nominated by the member states and may in practice act to promote national interests as well. This implies that the criteria for their selection can be rather complex and, consequently, they are worth studying. However, only a limited research has been done so far on this issue even though a few studies were published. The thesis is well versed in this existing literature.

The thesis focuses on a meaningful central research question – “which factors explain the selection of European Commissioners?” Theoretically, the thesis proceeds from the principal-agent (PA) framework that can be considered as the most relevant theoretical option for the exploration of the possibility that the Commissioners are selected by the member states to represent their interests. However, as was pointed out above the Commission must be at the same time also viewed as an agent that is selected by the European Council and the European Parliament to solve some policy problems. Given that, I suppose that the author should discuss in the theoretical part both types of the principal-agent relationship (1. between the EC/EP and the Commission; 2. between the individual member states and the individual Commissioners) that simultaneously occur and explain why she thinks that the second relationship is more significant than the first one. What is also missing is a suggestion of control mechanisms that the member states may use to control “their” Commissioners. The thesis claims that the individual Commissioners are the agents of the member states, but when outlining the control mechanisms it mentions those mechanisms that are mainly used to secure the control of the Council over the Commission as a whole rather than the control of the individual governments over the national Commissioners.

The explanation for the different selection tendencies by the small and new states based on credible commitments is interesting. But I just wonder to what extent it is really plausible, in particular whether it is reasonable to believe that in the given states the domestic political pressures are not strong enough to overcome the politicized logic. In addition, it could be contestable that the older states proved their loyalty and compliance as some of them had strong issues with European integration (the UK, Denmark, Greece) and some of them also had large compliance deficits in the past. One can also wonder if bigger states have indeed a lesser need to show a commitment to European



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integration – exactly because from one perspective they can be suspected of having a greater tendency to seek to manipulate the common decisions to promote their interests than smaller states. The author would enhance the plausibility of the argument if she explained it with a greater depth. This would be even more warranted given the fact that the argument is later not confirmed by the empirical analysis. Overall, the theoretical arguments could be made deeper and presented in a more detailed way.

As for the methodology, the initial plan was to conduct a regression analysis of the selection and combine it with several case studies. In the thesis, the author withdrew from this plan and carries out only a descriptive analysis. She explains this decision by the unpredictability of data. The main reason seems to be that the past data is not strong enough to allow us to predict future nominations. It is debatable to what extent this reason is very convincing. Even though the regression results might not be strong enough to make predictions/generalizations possible, they could still provide us with a more complex explanation of the previous nominations. However, a descriptive quantitative analysis is a sufficient method for an MA thesis. Overall, I hence do not regard the withdrawal from the quantitative analysis as a major issue.

The resulting empirical analysis is relatively well done. Concerning the quantitative data, the thesis covers four Colleges. Owing to this, it gathers enough data to explore the issue beyond single Colleges. The method is very simple but it makes possible to test the stated hypotheses. Compared to the statistical analysis, case studies are somewhat weaker. The selection of the Czech Republic and France is adequate as it combines both a larger and smaller and an older and newer member state. Yet, the case analysis is not very deep. In particular, the one on France is extremely short (basically one page and a half). While I understand that the data on the very process of selection is not straightforwardly available, presumably more could be analyzed and written here. The case study on France fails to bring in any information concerning the selection process – it only summarizes the profiles of the Commissioners. The Czech case study is done a little bit better. Perhaps the author should have done only a Czech case study and go more into depth in this single case.

Vedlejší kritéria:

Bez připomínek.



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Celkové hodnocení:

In sum, I think that Tereza Nečasová wrote a well-done thesis that focuses on an interesting topic and is well anchored in the literature. It is necessary to appreciate the effort to build a theoretical explanation and the data collection and analysis. The weaker parts are a short and partly not sufficiently elaborated theoretical framework and the limited depth of case studies, in particular in the French case. The thesis would also benefit from an attempt to apply a regression analysis (even if that attempt would not succeed completely), even though it is certainly not a precondition for an MA thesis and the applied descriptive analysis enables the author to make conclusions regarding her hypotheses.

Výsledná známka:

B

Podpis: