REVIEW OF DIPLOMA THESIS

Review type: supervisor's review
Author of the diploma thesis: Kim Roskam
Title: Political Parties in Contemporary Policy Process Frameworks: A Unitary Collective Actor or a Dynamic Organisation?
Author of the review: PhDr. Vilém Novotný, Ph.D.

Factual benefits of thesis and its added value
Kim Roskam's submitted diploma thesis addresses a highly interesting issue of political parties in the policy process frameworks. The issue is very relevant because of contemporary political development, which brings consideration of the role of political parties and politics back in the policy process. In this respect, the thesis is highly relevant for the Public and Social Policy Studies program.
The thesis has several substantial benefits for the field. First, the thesis aptly summarizes the theoretical background concerning conceptualizing political parties as unitary collective actors and dynamic organizations by offering the operationalization of both concepts for use in the policy process research. Second, it compares the representation of political parties in the leading policy process frameworks. Third, the thesis shows how it is possible to use the editions of the Theories of the Policy Process as a data source on the development of policy process frameworks and our knowledge about the policy process.

Structure of thesis (form, structure, and conception of the outline, presentation of content)
The thesis outlines the standard structure of a diploma thesis, starting with an introduction followed by a thorough literature review on the conceptualization of political parties and their relation to the policy process. After that, the methodology of the thesis is presented. Next, the thesis outlines findings concerning the representation of political parties in selected policy process frameworks, discusses these findings, and compares them. Finally, it summarizes the findings and their discussions in the conclusion. Thus, the outline of the thesis and the presentation of the content are very clear. I appreciate the effort to present the content of every part at its beginning and summarize the findings.

Setting and answering research questions and objectives
The research questions and objectives and the thesis answer are well set. I would like to emphasize the extraordinary analytical way of thinking when approaching the questions and answers.

Sophistication and application of theoretical approaches
Sophistication and application of theoretical approaches are some of the strong parts of the thesis. The thesis thoroughly addresses the political parties' literature, emphasizing the "three faces" concept and applying it sophisticatedly to the selected policy process frameworks. For the sake of perfection, I would only appreciate a bit deeper description of more recent party ideal types (e.g., business-firm party) at the end of Part 3.1.

Methodological approach and application of particular methods and approaches
The methodological approach and application of particular methods and approaches are also very well done. The thesis represents a complex, precise, and targeted approach that brings the findings needed to answer the research questions.

Use of literature and data

The use of literature is also a powerful part of the work. The literature is very complex, covering very well all parts of the thesis, and it is very well through all parts of the thesis.

The use of data is also very well in line with the thesis' purpose. I would only appreciate having the frequency tables with all key terms in the appendix – but this is a very minor issue.

The factual accuracy and convincing of the argumentation

The convincingness of the argumentation is very strong, and I appreciate the highly sophisticated analytical approach and particularly the analytical way of thinking which is extraordinary and refreshing.

Stylistic and text editing

The stylistic and text editing is also very good, with only a few orthographical issues (e.g., missing blanks)

The work with references follows the selected citation style (APA 7th edition).

In sum, I really appreciate the thesis. It is an example of complex work linking theory, empirical analysis, and critical thinking together.

Antiplagiarism check: Turnitin, 24% similarity

I checked the Turnitin results, and I have not found any trace of plagiarism. Most of the similarity is based on formal parts of the thesis and the reference list. There are also quite a lot of textual fragments, but after a closer check, they are not related to the text, and thus, they are a coincidence in formulations given by the academic language used.

For the above reasons, I recommend the thesis for defense with an A.

Questions for defense:

Can you formulate the contribution of your thesis to our understanding of political parties and their role in the policy process according to policy conflict frameworks ("so what?" question)?

Can you address in more detail the issues of validity and reliability concerning your thesis?

Date: January 12, 2024   Signature:

PhDr. Vilém Novotný, Ph.D.