



REVIEW OF DIPLOMA THESIS

Review type: Supervisor's Review

Author of the diploma thesis: Henry Dominguez

Title: Marijuana regulation in Colombia and Uruguay: A Comparative Policy Analysis

Author of the review: Martin Nekola, PhD.

The thesis compares different drug regulatory regimes in LATAM and focuses on Colombia and Uruguay as the two most different examples. For this purpose, the author applies multi-criteria decision analysis, developed Rogeberg et al.¹, yet in limited form without an expert panel. From the view of public policy and particularly drug policy, this topic deserves systematic research for both academic (methodological) and practical policy reasons.

The **theoretical section** provides a clear summary of the contributions of and challenges to existing research seeking to describe and explain drug use and related regulatory regimes in the context of public policy in general and LATAM in particular. Separate sections are dedicated to the history of drug policy, global drug regulation efforts, development in LATAM countries and detailed description of cases (Colombia and Uruguay).

The **methodologic approach** is appropriate and promises to provide a strong foundation for the research. The decision to comparative analysis and Rogeberg's analytical framework is well justified and grounded in the literature. Indeed, such application is heavily limited by the fact that policies are not evaluated by a panel of experts and is thus prone to certain biases related to author's subjective preferences, worldviews and/or selective attention/significance given to particular fields. However, I am not aware of such biases (given my limited knowledge of LATAM context).

The **results** provide an exceptionally detailed and nuanced picture of both countries in all analytical categories of the framework. The student discusses results in the context of previous studies (in particular, Rogeberg et al.) and provides quite interesting findings regarding differences and similarities between Colombia and Uruguay). However, evaluative part of the thesis is relatively weak compared to the descriptive one, which might be (among others) result of above-mentioned limitation. Experts discussion would indeed

¹ Rogeberg, O., Bergsvik, D., Phillips, L. D., van Amsterdam, J., Eastwood, N., Henderson, G., Lynskey, M., Measham, F., Ponton, R., Rolles, S., Schlag, A. K., Taylor, P., & Nutt, D. (2018). A new approach to formulating and appraising drug policy: A multi-criterion decision analysis applied to alcohol and cannabis regulation. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 56, 144–152. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2018.01.019>



bring a more elaborated and detailed assessment of drug policy impact on well-being, crime, health etc.

Finally, **stylistic and text editing** is relatively poor for a diploma thesis. The text contains quite a lot of minor typos (use of apostrophes, articles, commas, verb forms etc.). More seriously and despite my efforts to point out this during consultations, the text's overall structure is confusing and illogical for me. Such a problem also led to the repetitiveness of some part of the text.

For the above reasons, I recommend the diploma thesis for the defense.

My grading is "B".

Date: January 19th, 2021

Signature: