

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

IEPS – International Economic and Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

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| Title of the thesis: | <i>The Navajo Nation: The Consequences of Living Between two Forms of Incomplete Governance.</i> |
| Author of the thesis: | Kristen Gressly |
| Referee: | PhDr. Marie Jelínková, Ph.D. |

1. Theoretical background:

The paper uses Hirschman's Exit, Voice, Loyalty theory (EVLTL) to understand the relationship between the Navajo government and its people. The author introduces the theory well and understandably outlines its parts. On the other hand, the text omits any criticism of the theory (or weaker parts of the theory) and Hirschman's reaction towards it. But the application of the theory is relatively successful, and the theory fits nicely on the investigated issue. Still, several significant challenges remain:

(1) The text nicely gathers much vital information on Navajo Nation and adds extra information obtained from a survey among Navajos. However, the text does not focus much on the relationship between the Navajos government and members of Navajo society. (Possibly, such information was difficult to obtain. If so, it should be mentioned.). This is especially problematic because a significant part of the theory and the recommendations focus on the relationship between the government and its citizens.

(2) The Navajo people who stay on the Navajo reservation are considered loyal, according to EVLTL. But how do we know it? Are they really loyal? Somebody could argue that they are just passive... This remark is closely connected with criticism of the theory, concluding that passive behaviour is often understood as loyal.

2) Contribution:

The thesis topic is well chosen and belongs among significant and challenging issues our contemporary societies (should) dealt with. The paper presents original ideas and demonstrates the critical thinking of the author without any doubts. With the minor exceptions stated above on the Navajo government, the paper presents relevant empirical material. According to my perspective, the papers' distinctive value lies mainly in asking questions about preserving autonomy and executing some US/other law at once or keeping traditions essential for identity in the contemporary world.

The explanation of why many investigated issues occur is well demonstrated and founded. The policy recommendation seems to be valid, but they also raise many questions (e.g. related to the accountability of the Navajo government, comparison to other reservations which are not performing well etc.), which needs to be answered in further research.

3) Methods:

The hypotheses for the study are clearly stated. The investigation among the Navajo population, which, I suppose, was not easy, brings interesting results and confirms (though the sample of respondents cannot/is not intended to be representative) the expectation of the theory. Next, the paper also introduces available information on Navajo Nation and puts them into perspective to create a comprehensive picture. Some other issues (e.g. the relationship to Navajo government) could be tackled as well, but overall, the used methods are more than adequate for the level of master theses.

4) Literature:

The thesis demonstrates the author’s sound understanding of relevant literature. The author gathered the most important sources related to Navajo Nation and uses representative bibliography to support her statements. I especially appreciate well-chosen material and data related to the current situation of the Navajo Nation, which enabled a deeper understanding of the key “grey” gaps related to its governing structure. I have some marginal comments related to direct quotations. This thesis usually distinguishes well between direct and indirect quotation of used literature, but the direct quotation often misses the page from which it was copied (see, e.g. pages 36, 37).

5) Manuscript form:

The manuscript is well and logically structured. The beginning of the thesis repeats the same ideas several times, but it could be intended to stress the purpose of the text. The language and the style of the thesis must be appreciated. The vocabulary used indicates the good academic ability of the student. The text is easy to follow. The text also refers to all graphs and tables used and is free from typos. The reader might benefit from a bit clearer numbering and the use of more pronounced subheadings. However, this is a marginal note because, overall, the text structure is very clear.

Suggested questions for the defence are:

- (a) Some authors (somewhat of an economic focus) would argue the solution to a given situation does not lie in areas such as loyalty and participation, but above all and only in the economic aspect. Would you argue against this emphasis? If so, how?
- (b) From my perspective, a particular shortcoming of the thesis is that all the recommendations are directed towards the Navajo government. Unfortunately, its functioning is only roughly outlined in the text. Does the author have any information on how the Navajo government approaches at least some of the proposed topics? Supposedly, the Navajo government had to deal with several of them in the past.

I recommend the thesis for final defence.

SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED (for details, see below):

| CATEGORY | POINTS |
|--|---------------|
| <i>Theoretical background (max. 20 points)</i> | 15 |
| <i>Contribution (max. 20 points)</i> | 16 |
| <i>Methods (max. 20 points)</i> | 17 |
| <i>Literature (max. 20 points)</i> | 18 |
| <i>Manuscript form (max. 20 points)</i> | 19 |
| TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points) | 85 |
| The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F) | B |

DATE OF EVALUATION: May 27th, 2021

Referee Signature