



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Václav Vlček

Title: Who Governs? The Participation of Ministers in Council Meetings

Programme/year: MV / 2017

Author of Evaluation (external assessor): Michal Parížek

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	29
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	38
<i>Total</i>		80	77
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	9
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	19
TOTAL		100	96



Evaluation

Major criteria:

This is an excellent master's thesis with an original analysis of a relevant and well defined topic. Its target is to evaluate the participation of government ministers at the sessions of the Council of the EU. It starts from the empirical observation that the Council meetings are not always attended by the ministers themselves, but rather by their deputies. It then proceeds to identify systematic variation e.g. across countries and across Council formations, and to test (on the individual level) possible predictors of minister's participation/absence. It finds the probability of ministers' participation to be influenced by several factors, including presidency, domestic EU political orientation, or national elections. It also finds descriptively a decrease in participation rates, as compared to the only previously published scholarly study dealing with topic but covering an earlier period (paper published in JEPP in 2015).

The work has three virtues. First, it is deeply theoretically rooted. The author knows what he writes about, knows the relevant literature, and is able to relate his analysis directly to current theoretical approaches to the study of EU politics. Second, the work is based on an enormous amount of empirical data. In fact, I think the manually collected dataset used is in terms of its size perfectly comparable to scholarly datasets compiled for larger projects. It just surpasses the standards for master's theses by a degree of magnitude. I have a lot of respect for this kind of work. Third, the analysis as such (using logistic regression) surpasses significantly the standards at IPS. Again, the authors went significantly beyond what one would normally expect from students in terms of analytical/methodological skills.

Minor criteria:

No comments, all is fine.



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Overall evaluation:

This is an excellent piece of work with a significant scholarly potential. To some extent, it complements a study published recently in a top EU journal. At least in terms of the data forming the basis for the study, it actually goes further. The thesis can be used as a basis for a peer-reviewed scholarly publication, I am sure about it.

Suggested grade: excellent (1)

Signature: