

Abstract

Advisory Bodies and Expertise in the Czech Politics - Epistemic Communities and the Influence on the Reforms of Higher Education and Pension System

Master thesis

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The Master thesis *Advisory Bodies and Expertise in the Czech Politics – Epistemic Communities and the Influence on the Reforms of Higher Education and Pension System* concerns with the relation between politics and expertise. So-called epistemic community represents the knowledge interpreter that we consider an independent actor in the political process. In the theoretical part of the text, we have explained the original definition of the concept as well as its critics and case studies that cover various contexts. Following most of the authors, we have applied a looser definition of the concept and deconstructed its rigid criteria.

The empirical part of the thesis presents a case study (N=4) based on comparative methods that analyzes variable influence of four particular epistemic communities (the authors of the White Paper on Tertiary Education, Bezdek's Committee, Bezdek's Committee II, and the National Economic Council) on policy-making process and its sources. Regarding our intention and research questions, we have chosen two qualitative methods – in-depth interviews and content analysis of relevant texts. We have found a limited extent of influence of epistemic communities in the policy-making process that hardly goes beyond agenda-setting and formulation. Nevertheless, the concept of epistemic communities is regarded as an appropriate tool to expose the cognitive content of public policies.