

Assessment of Master Thesis – Opponent



Study programme: **International Economic Relations**

Field of study: **International and Diplomatic Studies**

Academic year: **2016/2017**

Master Thesis Topic: **European integration through sceptical prism in the European Parliament**

Author's name: **Bc. Irina Kruhmalova**

Ac. Consultant's Name: **Ing. Mgr. Jan Němec, Ph.D.**

Opponent: **doc. PhDr. Karel Müller, Ph.D.**

	Criterion	Mark (1–4)
1.	Overall objective achievement	2
2.	Logical structure	2
3.	Using of literature, citations	1
4.	Adequacy of methods used	2
5.	Depth of analysis	2
6.	Self-reliance of author	2
7.	Formal requirements: text, graphs, tables	2
8.	Language and stylistics	3

Comments and Questions:

The thesis is suggesting to examine the broad range of Euroskeptics inside the European Parliament (EP), plus to understand an appeal of Euroskepticism for general publics. It interprets the most salient trends of Euroskepticism in the EP and Irina have made a credible case for the Europeanization growing gradually to become a dominant cleavage at both EU level, and at the level of member states. Though this is not a new discovery, it is important to follow and question (falsify) this relatively new political trend.

I consider this thesis very good. Firstly, Irina thesis deals with a very relevant and topical subject. The research framework acquired a logical structure and is based upon an excellent bibliography and sources base; Irina thesis tries to combine theoretical and empirical analysis, and is written clearly and comprehensibly. Irina delivered a solid piece of scientific outcome, which has its merit and deserves some credit.

Regarding weaknesses, though thesis is well written, its English is far from perfect. There are clumsy expressions, some formulations are close to the level of incomprehensibility. Being a non-native speaker this is quite understandable and it is not – in my view – to the point of making the text unreadable. Also, the theoretical part of the analysis is dragging on for too long, and not all of it is utilised in the empirical analysis. Though there are very good bridges between theoretical and empirical, these two levels of analysis could have been more productively interwoven. Plus Irina writes at the Intro that “Taggart and Szczerbiak, has been chosen as the central” as well as that “the classification of Kopecky and Mudde serves as an explanatory theory for the study of chosen parliamentary groups”. This does not make sense, to select one typology as a key concept, and then to use another one in the empirical analysis. This shows some inconsistencies in a “dialog” between theoretical and empirical levels of her approach. Further, however the second hypothesis seems relevant and interesting, the first one is quite banal, since the rise of Euroskepticism in the EP seems obvious.

Minor weak spots: (1) the thesis does not delivered much on the reason or causes of popular appeal of Euroskepticism as promised in the Intro. (2) places the text in too descriptive and short of sufficient analytical depth, (3) it was not obvious, why the word Euro-enthusiasts is used and whether it refers to the same phenomenon as Euro optimists (which is used in the Intro) – this is perhaps due to a general confusion in the Europeanization discourse, where Euroskepticism is used as an opposite to Euro optimism, instead of Euro pessimism (this sometimes leads to an implicit conclusion that criticism of the EU affairs indicates a pessimistic tinge towards the EU integration). That is why I prefer to talk about Euro

optimists and pessimists, which leaves plenty of room for both sceptical Euro optimists, and sceptical Euro pessimists; (4) the word “study/studies” is overused throughout the whole thesis on the one hand, on the other hand the word “interpretation” is regrettably missing.

Questions for Irina defence disputation:

The presidential election in Austria and France and the parliamentary election in the Netherlands seemed to ratchet up the rise on Euroskepticism, and the election of Manuel Macron in particular appears to invoke a new type of Euro patriotism. What is your interpretation of these events in the light of your research on Euroskepticism? Do you see it as a new trend/pattern or rather as ephemeral and disconnected political events? And how (or, whether) this is going to affect the EP political landscape?

Conclusion: The Master Thesis is recommended for the defence.

Suggested Grade: **2**

Date: 23/05/2017

doc. PhDr. Karel Müller, Ph.D.
Opponent