

Annex 1 – Template Dissertation Report EPS



Joint Dissertation Review

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| Name of the student: | Lennart Carl Hubert Paetz |
| Title of the thesis: | Entering the European Stage? Roles in Enlargement |
| Reviewer: | Toni Rodon |

1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

(relevance of the research question, research objective, literature review):

This MA examines applies the role theory framework to examine the motivations behind EU enlargement. Given that the EU may not yet reached its 'full capacity', studying why the European club wants to be larger is still an interesting question. In particular, the MA suggests applying the role theory framework to understand such process. Although this perspective is interesting and I can see its potential in understanding the process, it is a bit unclear why we need it. In other words, what type of contribution does the role theory bring compared to other ways of analysing the motivations behind EU enlargement? This part is a bit unclear.

The research objective is clear, although the formulation of the RQ is a bit odd. "How does the EU's role performance in enlargement negotiations with the Western Balkan countries reflect internal divisions between value-based and interest-driven motivations?" What does it mean 'performance' in this case? The question includes the 'Western Balkans' but only one country is analysed. The question talks about 'negotiations', but the MA largely focuses on 'motivations'.

Finally, the literature review is correct and most important works and theories are discussed and analysed. The lit review is often a bit excessive and enters a bit too much into detail with some works. For instance, it discusses the 'decreased effectiveness of conditionality' or other temporal dynamics which are later not included in the analysis.

2. ANALYSIS

(methodology, argument, theoretical backing, appropriate work with sources):

The analysis is based on a qualitative strategy. Five interviews and document analysis are performed. This is an appropriate strategy if one wants to examine the motivations of actors regarding EU enlargement. Despite the approach is correct, the analysis feels a bit limited and short. For instance, only two interviews from the Montenegro side are performed and both of them are from representative of the civil society. This is an important limitation of the MA dissertation. The analysis of the interviews could have also been polished a bit more, for instance identifying themes, contradictions, vague/precise statements, etc.—strategies all very common in qualitative works.

Finally, the MA focuses on Montenegro. This is largely fine, but the reader has the feeling many times that the focus will be in all the Balkans. In addition, the section justifying the case selection is a bit confusing, as more attention is put onto why other cases are not selected rather than on justifying what we learn from studying the Montenegro case.

3. CONCLUSIONS

(persuasiveness, link between data and conclusions, achievement of research objectives):

The conclusions of the MA dissertation are clear, and the reader learns a few things after reading it, even though the final feeling is that we do not know whether we knew that before or not. Interest-driven and value-driven motivations have already been analysed by previous works and the contribution of this MA fails to relate to those.

4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE

(appropriate language, adherence to academic standards, citation style, layout):

The formal aspects and the language are correct. The writing style is often a bit convoluted, and some parts are a bit repetitive and feel long.

5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

(strong and weak point of the dissertation, other issues)

The strongest part of this dissertation is that it tackles an interesting issue that is still in the political agenda. The other interesting thing is that I think we still need to understand the motivation behind EU enlargement.

The weakest point is that the MA does not entirely deliver on this promise. The theoretical review is a bit confusing and the empirical part is rather simple.

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| Grade (A-F) | B |
| Date | |
| DD/MM/AAAA | |