

Euroculture Thesis Assessment Form



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Name of Student: Namchoke Sasikornwong

Thesis Title: EC/EU Membership and Austria, Sweden and Finland: Neutrality redefined with European Norms?

Home University: Palacky University, Olomouc

Host University: University of Groningen

Name of Supervisor: Dr. C.M. Megens

1) **Content: Problem statement, method and theory:**

a) Is the topic of the thesis clearly presented and motivated?

Yes, the topic is formulated in the introduction and focuses on the debates in the early nineties in three neutral countries in Europe on the compatibility of their neutrality with EU membership.

b) Are the aims and objectives of the thesis clearly identified and explained?

Yes, to some extent as the student argues it is important to get a better understanding of the role of the neutral states in the formation of the EU's common foreign and security policy in the early 1990s. The students also wants to provide insight into the compatibility of neutrality with mutual defence as formulated in the Treaty of Lisbon, based upon the analysis of the compatibility as seen by the three neutrals in the 1990s (p.3).

c) Is there a well formulated problem statement and is it of sufficient complexity for an MA level? Briefly explain.

The problem statement is clearly stated and focuses on the political debates during the accession period of the three neutral states which started in 1989 with the formal application of Austria up to 1995 when Austria, Sweden and Finland joined the EU. The thesis investigates how neutrality was redefined in relation to European norms

d) Has a convincing rationale for conducting the research been formulated?

Yes.

- e) Has a suitable methodology and theoretical frame been taken to solve the stated problems?

Europeanisation theory is used as a theoretical framework for the thesis. The theories are introduced in a separate paragraph and used throughout the thesis to analyse the empirical results.

The methodology section in the Introduction discusses the relevance of history or path dependency in terms of the Europeanisation theories and briefly introduces comparativism. At the end of the thesis this comparative perspective is repeated in a separate chapter which does not add much to the analysis and seems a bit scholastic.

- f) In case where empirical research has been conducted: is there a suitable research design and has the research been conducted adequately?

The historical analysis of the emergence of neutrality in the three countries is very relevant for the debates in the early 1990s. The proportion between the historical part and the paragraph on the 1990s is somewhat uneven, in particular in the Swedish case.

The analysis of the debates as such is good, taken into account the literature which is available. A more detailed and elaborated analysis would only be possible on the basis of primary sources.

- g) Does the conclusion provide convincing answers/proof to the initial questions/hypotheses?

Yes, the comparison between the three countries increases the understanding of the relevance of identity for the interpretation and discussions on neutrality

- h) Does the research constitute a contribution to knowledge in this field or domain?

2) **Structure:**

- a) Is the thesis coherently structured in chapters and sections?

The structure as such is okay apart from a very brief chapter IV on the comparative perspective.

- b) Are concepts clearly introduced and explained, and critically and consistently applied?

The introduction of the concepts at the beginning is okay. When applying the theories in later chapters the student should have used his own words in order to proof that he actually understand the theories.

3) **Sources** (primary and secondary):

- a) Has (enough) relevant (primary and secondary) literature been adequately interpreted and integrated into the thesis?

The literature review on neutrality gives a representative overview of various points of view in the debate on neutrality. The analysis of the three case studies is based on a

great variety of literature, except in the Finnish case for which less relevant literature was available.

b) Is the bibliography/list of references complete and accurate?

Yes, the bibliography meets all criteria.

4) Stylistics:

a) Is the use of language (English) acceptable and of the required standard (i.e. no spelling mistakes and typos, range of vocabulary, grammar)?

Yes, definitely.

b) Are references in the text given in a coherent and consistent manner (either in-text or as footnotes)?

Yes, referencing is accurate and consistent

5) Format:

a) How is the thesis presented (i.e. consistency in lay-out, choice of fonts, headings, tables and graphs)?

Excellent.

b) Does the thesis contain all required elements (title page, declaration, table of contents, bibliography, etc.)?

Yes.

6) Quality of writing process:

a) To what degree has the student been able to work independently?

The student has worked hard and conscientiously on this project, and was able to organize his work very well. He kept in touch with me to discuss the next steps in the research process, but showed a great degree of independence and maturity during this process.

b) Have recommended revisions been executed to a satisfying degree?

Yes, definitely. During the final phase in the thesis writing process the student has managed to incorporate new theoretical literature in this version. I would like to commend him on the way he discusses and reflects upon these theories.

c) Any other relevant comments (e.g. on planning and commitment of the student).

7) Possible questions for thesis defence (only if this thesis is to be defended orally)

(National) Grade: 8

Date and place: Groningen, 14 August 2015

Signature: 