

Evaluation Master Thesis

Name student	Denisa Rihosková
Title of Thesis	Comparison of the Possible Forms of Territorial Administration in the Countries of the European Union
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Date	30.9.2019
Evaluation	
Statement of problem/ research question	Sufficient (4)
Outline and Structure	Satisfactory (3)
Explanation of Concepts and Terminology	Sufficient (4)
Coverage of literature (relevance and extent) and Citation	Satisfactory (3)
Critical analysis and application of theoretic approaches/ Methodology	Sufficient (4)
Language (Grammar, Orthography, linguistic expression)	Good (2)
Comments	
<p>Judging by its title the thesis sets itself an ambitious task: a comparison of different forms of territorial administration in the area of the European Union. Already the European Charter of Local Self-Governments sets out in its preamble, why this topic is of crucial importance: local authorities are considered to be one of the main foundations of any democratic regime, they guarantee the right of citizens to participate in political decisions and they contribute to the decentralization of power, thus bringing decision-making on local issues back to the local level (and in this way also contribute to the realization of a principle of subsidiarity). Since the 1990s regional aspects have gained greater salience also within the European Union, as European integration allowed for greater cooperation between regions across state-borders, increasingly self-confident regions increased their lobbying efforts in Brussels and saw chances for greater power by referring to the principle of subsidiarity. The Committee of Regions was founded in 1994, with advisory tasks as enshrined in Article 307 TFEU. A comparative analysis of the role of municipalities and other bodies of local self-government is therefore helpful in understanding different administrative traditions and approaches in different member states and can also highlight challenges in the organization of such bodies and their contribution to local democracy.</p> <p>Still, the thesis still holds some weaknesses, which must be addressed. The research questions is not clearly formulated. In the introduction it is stated that the amount of power and the competences of the local authorities in three member states (the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria) is analyzed and as the aim is also to identify the differences, this will be done in a comparative way. This is a rather descriptive task. Nevertheless two hypothesis are formulated: first, that the more competencies a local authority in a given country has, the closer it is to the citizen; and second, that the Austrian system of public administration is more efficient than the systems of Slovakia and the Czech Republic. None of these hypotheses can be related to a guiding research question. Further it is unclear on which theoretic basis these hypotheses are formulated and thus it is difficult to assess, how these hypotheses can be tested. How can closeness to the citizen be measured – other than by counting the number of competences – which makes the hypotheses in itself tautological.</p>	

Which aspects give rise to the expectation that the Austrian system of local government is more effective? There is no explanation given. Further, how is effectiveness to be measured? As neither a clear research question is formulated and no explanation for the selection of hypotheses given it remains also unclear, whether the selection of cases is appropriate for the analysis. Here the main reason for the selection of the cases seems a common historic development, but then especially the interesting aspect would have been a more concrete analysis of the differences that nevertheless exist. In the conclusions again a somewhat different research question is answered, the question how differentiation in entrusted competences is caused.

The legal analysis itself remains rather vague and on the surface. Hardly any references are made to concrete provisions, no systematic analysis of legal sources is provided, also not from a comparative perspective. Also legal terminology is not consistently used: already at the beginning the "primary law" (obviously making reference to Constitutional Law) of individual states is mentioned – a terminology which is usually reserved for treaty law of the European Union. While the thesis takes into account the Charter of local self-government of the Council of Europe, the chapter on the role of the charter for the European Union (Chapter 2.1.1) raises more questions than it provides answers. In how far legal instruments of the Council of Europe are (legally) relevant also within the context of the European Union is not problematized, while the reference to Article 198 TEU (page 25) makes no sense in this context. Not only does Article 198 TEU not exist, but also reading this as a reference to Article 198 TFEU does not add clarification, as this article covers the relation with overseas territories. On the other hand no mention is made on the role of the Committee of Regions within the European Union.

Especially the tables are helpful to better understand the overall competences of the territorial units. Still, the comparative aspects are rather short and here the thesis could have gained by going deeper into the differences, their causes and effects.

Overall Grade	Satisfactory (3)
Questions for Exam	Question 1: How can "effective government" be measured, especially in a comparative perspective? Question 2: Which factors give rise to the expectation that the Austrian system of local government is more effective?



Doris Wydra