

Master Thesis Evaluation – Tutor’s Review

Philosophical Faculty, University of Hradec Králové, Czech Republic

Author of the Thesis: Elvin Francisco Rodríguez Fabilena

Title of the Thesis: Social Policies in the Central European Countries: What Could learn Nicaragua from them? Fiscal policies, youth employment policies and pension systems in the Visegrad Group

The Objective of the Thesis:

A **B** C D E F

Comments: The objective of the master thesis is defined in the introduction of the text: *“To identify what good practices related to the youth employment policies, fiscal policies and social security systems, have contributed to ensure the fiscal sustainability of the pension systems in the Visegrad Group.”* The formulation is rather clear. I find the objective to be typical one for doing comparative social policy research. The researcher should accept some level of simplification during setting up the topics to compare.

Structure of the Thesis:

A B C D E F

Comments: There is nothing missing from the formal point of view (necessary parts of the text – theoretical background, methodology, findings etc.). From the content point of view: I appreciate the effort of the author to have clear structure, to not leave the main objective of the text. So I didn’t find any really redundancy in the text at all.

Theoretical Part of the Thesis

A B C D E F

Comments: Theoretical part of the thesis is adequately long and uses rather adequate resources to present actual data for the study. The part describing the Nicaragua common issues in social policy (chapters 1.1 to 1.3) is little bit different from the structure of later chapters describing the V4 countries situation.

One of things to discuss may be the actual situation in Nicaragua concerning youth employment/unemployment or pension system – to copy the structure of later chapters.

Methodology Part of the Thesis:

A **B** C D E F

Comments: Methods and research design is described in the chapter 3. I find the structure and content of the chapter 3 to be adequate. Especially the table of “transformation steps” to do the research helps readers to understand the design well (p. 57 to 59). Unfortunately there is some information missing there. As far as I know the author made big effort to conduct personal interviews with experts all across the V4 countries. So the information about this might be placed into the chapter 3.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Research Outputs:

A **B** C D E F

Comments: The interpretation part of the text is rather short. In my opinion the author made more research activities than presented in the final text here.

Fulfillment of the Objectives and Conclusions of the Thesis:

A **B** C D E F

Comments: The conclusions are rather general (not into deep) described. It has something to do with the general objective of the thesis – to bring some inspiration for the Nicaragua. Despite the fact of some (over)generalisation I find the objectives of the thesis to be fulfilled (see the “practical application” comment below).

Formal Issues of the Thesis:

A B C D E F

Comments: The formal level is of required quality. As far as I may say, the level of english is also good (english is second language for me as well as for the author).

Practical Application of the Thesis Findings:

A B **C** D E F

Comments: All the national systems have long evolution in the background and it is rather dangerous step to adopt the whole (sub)systems of social policy from abroad. It is obvious even inside the European Union space (there are still many differences in the social systems despite the fact of effort to harmonize the legislation across the EU countries). In this context, I appreciate the author of the thesis have no unrealistic expectations about this.

Other Comments: None.

Questions to Discuss:

- What about the actual situation in Nicaragua? Is it possible to expect in middle time perspective (or far in the future) to have similar problems concerning demography (fertility, natality/birth-rate...) like V4 countries now have? And what about possible future “pacts” of Nicaragua with other surrounding countries to realize common social policies like V4?

- Pensions systems: They are some way dependent on political ideology dominating the public policy (generally liberal market mechanisms vs. state guaranteed re-distribution). Can you imagine the general tendency in Nicaragua in next decades?

Final Evaluation of the Thesis:

A **B** C D E F

Comments: First of all I would like to mention the author made really big effort to do his final thesis. I really appreciate the interconnection of all his steps during his study on master level of Philosophical Faculty, Univerity Hradec Králové. He visited the other countries of V4 during his studies and realized parts of his research continually!

The general choice of his topic is very well fit for the general objective of the study programme (Central European Studies). His research findings are good output from the Central European study of social policies. It may bring some inspiration for the Nicaragua actual situation, although the fact of limited possibilities to transfer of system logic of social policies to the other countries is obvious (see comments in above sub-parts of this review).

In Hradec Králové 23. 8. 2019

PhDr. Martin Smutek, Ph.D.

tutor's signature