

**CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE**  
**Faculty of Social Sciences**  
**Institute of International Studies**

**PROTOCOL ON DIPLOMA THESIS ASSESSMENT**  
**(Supervisor)**

Name of the student: **Marija Kovalenko**

Title: **The Problematics of the Evolution of Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide in the United States of America in Relation to the Development of Global Human Rights**

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Supervisor: **doc. PhDr. Francis Raška, PhD.**

**1. TOPIC AND OBJECTIVE (short information on the thesis, research objective):**

**This dissertation discusses the evolution of euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide in the United States within the context of global human rights.**

**2. CONTENT (complexity, original approach, argument, structure, theoretical and methodological backing, work with sources, appropriateness of annexes etc.):**

**The topic is a very complex one. The student's work is original and I do not have any problem with the structure. However, the content lacks other factors, which might have made the dissertation more robust. The methodology is acceptable.**

**3. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE (quality of language, citation style, graphics, formal aspects etc.):**

**I am aware of the fact that Marija is not a native speaker of the English language, so I forgive any minor grammatical/spelling errors. However, I wonder why she did not notice that she begins the treatise with Chapter 2. This demonstrates a lack of proofreading prior to final submission. Overall, the organization of the presented information is chaotic. The citations are fine.**

**4. STATEMENT ON THE ORIGINALITY OF THE THESIS**

The thesis was checked by the Turnitin/URKUND/Theses anti-plagiarism software and ....

**I agree with the findings.**

**5. SHORT COMMENTS BY THE REVIEWER (overall impression, strengths and weaknesses, originality of ideas, achievement of the research objective etc.):**

**Marija Kovalenko has chosen the topic of euthanasia and assisted suicide for her MA dissertation. The work contains an Introduction (Chapter 1), a separate Literature Review (Chapter 2), seven main chapters (Chapters 3-9), and a Conclusion (Chapter 10). Marija has included some charts and graphs at the end of the treatise. In the ensuing paragraphs, I will comment upon each part of the dissertation.**

**In the Introduction (Chapter 1), Marija places into perspective the issue of euthanasia and assisted dying and the controversy surrounding the manner in which death occurs. While her**

discussion is beneficial, the Introduction lacks a clear description of the content of individual chapters and leaves the reader guessing as to the general direction of the dissertation.

The review of the relevant literature (Chapter 2) presents the most important sources in minute detail. My question is why statistics that would be more suitable for the actual body of the dissertation are presented in the Literature Review. Even this chapter does not provide the reader with a clue about what to expect in the main chapters.

An historical background of sorts forms the subject of Chapter 3. Marija recapitulates the history of the pro-euthanasia movement in detail. She definitely provides a bird's-eye explanation of the ethical and philosophical background of the evolution of euthanasia in the United States. I feel that if the content of this chapter had been combined with that of Chapter 4 into a single chapter, everything would be clearer.

In Chapter 4, Marija proceeds to define the concepts of euthanasia and assisted dying and provides some examples of both legal and illegal practice depending on the state in question. If she had combined the contents of this chapter with chapter 3 (with the definitions coming first), it would have made much more sense to the reader who, unfortunately, might be confused with the order of facts as presented in the treatise thus far.

Chapter 5 addresses methodological considerations. Here, Marija discusses quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as rational choice theory. She definitely applies the concepts to the issue at hand and presents a number of findings from other studies. Though I appreciate some of the citations of the statistics dealing with the American context (which should be the focus of the work), there are a number of other studies and I often fail to see a connection between general and specific considerations.

In Chapter 6, Marija offers differing positions on the issue from the perspective of human rights. Much attention is devoted to the concept of human autonomy. I see that Marija has done much reading. Interestingly, there is a curious link between euthanasia/assisted dying and organ donation/transplantation in the debate.

Chapter 7 bears the title *The Globalization of Human Rights in the Context of Transnationalism*. The title itself does not indicate any specific relevance to the euthanasia debate, but, to Marija's credit, the actual content of the chapter is applied to the issue of euthanasia and quite focused. In particular, the mention of the global phenomenon of increasingly aging populations is most germane to the discussion.

Religious considerations are outlined in Chapter 8. While the discussions of Protestantism and Catholicism are accurate, the Protestant and Catholic perspectives by no means tell the entire story. The United States is a diverse country with many residents and citizens who belong to non-Christian denominations. A number of non-Christian, even non-Western religions are prominent and the chapter does not address them.

In Chapter 9, other socioeconomic factors are discussed, including healthcare costs and palliative (hospice) care. The most important finding is that opinion polls conducted in the United States over the years indicate growing support for euthanasia and assisted dying. In my view, Chapter 9 is the best of all the main chapters.

The Conclusion (Chapter 10) summarizes the points made in the body of the treatise. I quite like the way it is written.

Marija Kovalenko's Master's dissertation meets the standards of the Faculty of Social Sciences. However, some of the reservations I have expressed signify that the work is not of outstanding quality. If the oral defense goes well, I personally recommend a classification of VERY GOOD.

(C)

**6. COOPERATION WITH THE SUPERVISOR (communication with the supervisor, ability to reflect comments, shift from the original intention, etc.)**

I have no complaints about Marija's collaboration with me.

**7. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED DURING THE DEFENCE:**

How would you decide cases where the patient has left no written instructions and cannot provide informed consent in favor of euthanasia/assisted dying? Please explain.

What happens when someone who is not able to provide consent has family members who disagree on whether to apply euthanasia/assisted dying? Please explain.

**8. (NON-)RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTED GRADE:**

YES (on A-F scale)

C contingent on the oral defense.

Date: 30 August 2022

Signature: