

BACHELOR'S THESIS EXAMINER REPORT
PPE – Bachelor's in Politics, Philosophy and Economics
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Thesis title:	Special Laws Implemented by the Governments of Italy and Albania in Response to the Outbreak of Coronavirus
Student's name:	POBRATI Heliza
Referee's name:	Doc. Ing. Vladimír Benáček, CSc.

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	27	
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	5	
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	6	
Total		38	
Minor Criteria			
	Sources, literature	6	
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	4	
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	3	
Total		13	
TOTAL		51	

Plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score: With the general similarity indicator by Urkund of 34%, this thesis requires attention. I do not think that the thesis is plagiarism due to its descriptive journalistic character. Miss Pobrati cited the external text quite systematically. However, can we tolerate citations of 4% + 3% + 2% from three internet websites?

[NB:] If the plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score is above 15%, the reviewer has to include his/her assessment of the originality of the reviewed thesis in his/her review.

Reviewer's commentary according to the above criteria (min. 1800 characters including spaces when recommending a passing grade, min. 2500 characters including spaces when recommending a failing grade):

The selected topic is definitely socially relevant: the national policies of healthcare, plus policies of socio-economic rescues of individuals and firms, both in the case of a worldwide pandemic. Such a topic has its academic criteria, objectives and instruments. However, Miss Pobrati focused too much on the description of a myriad of government measures and neglected the general theoretical underpinning of her analysis. I did not observe the work with hypotheses and their testing. In her thesis, there are very few references to academic journals devoted to healthcare

(e.g. J. of Health Economics or International Journal of Healthcare Policy, etc.). The most problematic is the lack of anchoring of the research in some universal criterial underpinning. The author then approached the problem by picking a wide list of various laws, regulations, precepts and institutional reports and tried to compare them between countries. The list of resources in References makes 8 pages – too long and too thin for building an academic contribution.

The problem is that policies are extremely difficult to quantify and the analysis is thus missing the unifying inter-dependencies. Another problem is that technically perfect policy measures, though internationally approved, need not lead to higher health safety in the given country. So, short in quantified shared indicators, it is hard to make a cost-benefit analysis of some policy that would be trustworthy. An analysis of too many heterogeneous policy factors is difficult for anyone, inexperienced BA students included. A serious academic analysis of collected “facts” depends on a quantitative model where the reality is reduced to a few fundamental variables that are analysed statistically in time. The author did not attempt to follow such a methodological step and then was challenged by too much information.

Comments on the text:

P. 7: The quoted statement “Viruses are hundreds to thousands of times smaller than the head of a pin”, provided the head is 1 mm, should be verified. One nm = 10^{-6} mm.

Pp. 7-21: i.e. the full section Theoretical Considerations, is a series of descriptions of events, facts and characteristics. It lacks a more serious theoretical underpinning, i.e. the GENERAL description of objectives, then a statement about HYPOTHESES and METHODS for testing them. There are no references to theoretical academic texts, except one marginal reference to BARTÁK, M.: Health Economics. Extensive descriptions of the history of Italy and Albania should have been avoided. In fact, this fundamental chapter looks like an Introduction.

Pp. 21-49: i.e. section III. Practical Considerations is methodologically akin to clippings of various reports on actions undertaken (or missed to undertake) in the compared two countries. This method of analysis is not sufficient for a good BA thesis.

P. 23: The meaning of Graph 1, which is not explained in the text, bewilders the reader.

P. 25: Graphs 2 and 3 bring hardly any research value added to the text.

Pp. 36-40: The subsection on “The economic impact of the pandemic in Italy and Albania”, is open again to the same critical general provisions that I have mentioned above. In fact, it missed the opportunity to score better. Practically all implications or quantifications there are taken from outside.

Pp. 40-44: The subsection “Impact of the coronavirus on education” is the best part of the thesis. It is a sort of case study. It is a pity that Miss Pobrati did not concentrate on this topic and add more of her own contribution to the thesis. A missed chance.

P. 50: Conclusion. The thesis fulfilled one of the tasks: “to discuss the path of the COVID 19 epidemic in Italy and Albania”. Nonetheless, a mere discussion of facts and statements is not enough for a good thesis. This thesis missed the method for comparing Italy and Albania, and the comparison was to a large extent ad hoc.

BOTTOMLINE:

The good side of the thesis: It is written in good English, which makes it easy to read. There are a few typos there. Otherwise, the thesis lacks the theory and methodology of academic writing. It lacks references to academic papers of an analytical quantitative type. The result is an extensive description of facts without proper analysis leading to generalised knowledge.

I appreciate that Miss Pobrati dedicated a lot of her effort to the collection of data about Covid in Albania and Italy. She could learn a lot from that. However, processing such extensive hybrid data

would be difficult even to a technically skilled analyst. The processing is the weakest side of this thesis.

Proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F): E

Suggested questions for the defence are:

WHERE AND HOW A DIFFERENT METHODOLOGY COULD IMPROVE THE ANALYSIS OF YOUR DATA.

I recommend the thesis for the final defence but I have serious critical comments on the content of the thesis.



Referee Signature

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Quality standard
91 – 100	A	= outstanding (high honor)
81 – 90	B	= superior (honor)
71 – 80	C	= good
61 – 70	D	= satisfactory
51 – 60	E	= low pass at a margin of failure
0 – 50	F	= failing. The thesis is not recommended for defence.