

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

Thesis title:	An Experiment in the Development of Novel Republican Institutions
Student's name:	Nico Mastrangelo
Referee's name:	Tomáš Halamka

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	50	50
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	15	15
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	15	15
<i>Total</i>		80	
Minor Criteria			
	Sources, literature	10	9
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	5	4
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	18
TOTAL		100	98

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):

This excellent BA thesis puts forward an innovative idea of establishing a new institution on the communal level called The House of Commons. The experiment draws on the theory of the so-called "communitarian" or "neo-Athenian" republicanism developed by authors such as Hannah Arendt, Charles Taylor and Michael Sandel. The two latter thinkers (together with Tocqueville) provide the most important part of the theoretical background the author directly relies on in his experiment. Taylor and Sandel are well-established thinkers whose republican perspective is praised for the identification of the roots of several pressing problems of contemporary democracies. At the same time, they are also criticised for offering almost no concrete proposals on how to deal with these issues. The greatest contribution of the thesis is that it introduces exactly such a practical proposal formulated very much in the spirit of Taylor's and Sandel's theory. The structure and build-up of the argument are logical and proceed from what is wrong, through theoretical analysis of what is wrong, to a proposal designed to offer some remedy. To be more particular, through the inclusion of citizens in the Hall of Commons activities, the citizens come together and manage the issues of their local community. That might reignite their sensations of control over what is going on in politics and also help decrease the dangerous polarisation of

American politics. The whole argument is laid out in detail, carefully, and the individual steps of the argument are well interconnected. The practical parameters of the Hall of Commons are of course debatable, but I would like to appreciate how organically they ensue from the selected theoretical perspective. The features of the Hall of Commons combine inspirations from Athenian democracy with elements of neo-Athenian republicanism and contemporary deliberative democracy and with the innovative perspectives of the author of the thesis. The experiment is well-informed, creative and definitely worthy of further discussions beyond our faculty's final thesis defence.

I have identified no serious problems in the thesis. Some citations are occasionally not entirely in order, and the first third of the thesis could have perhaps been a little shorter. Sandel's and Taylor's theories are well known, so the thesis could have gone through them more quickly to save space for later innovative passages. On the other hand, proceeding as it does, the thesis offers a good introduction to readers unfamiliar with communitarian republicans, and as I already mentioned, the theory is well intertwined with the experiment. To conclude, this is a highly original thesis that is well-versed in the selected theory, introducing an informed and sophisticated experiment with the potential to enter wider debates in the fields. I recommend that the thesis be evaluated with the highest possible grade A.

Proposed grade: A

Suggested questions for the defence are:

Is membership in the Hall of Commons obligatory for the selected citizens?

I recommend the thesis for final defence.

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.