



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Filip Lukáš

Title: Politicization of the European Union in Czech media

Programme/year: International Relations [Mezinarodni vztahy]/2021

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Michal Parizek, Ph.D.

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	27
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	36
<i>Total</i>		80	73
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	9
	Style	5	4
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	18
TOTAL		100	91



Evaluation

Major criteria:

Filip Lukáš has written a very interesting and insightful thesis on the politicization of the EU in the Czech Republic, in particular with a focus on Czech media. The thesis is robust in design and measurement of politicization, and it is rooted in a relevant theoretical framework (derived from the post-functionalist theory). It works with a decent amount of literature, it is generally well crafted.

Some more concrete observations:

First, while the theoretical framework is intuitive and plausible, I am not clear on where exactly the formulation of H3.1 comes from, to some extent also of H2.1. These sub-hypotheses (the reasoning behind them) could have been explained better.

Second, the thesis presents very substantial original descriptive empirical findings. From what I can judge from my knowledge of Czech media system and from the process of writing and individual consultations, the empirical analysis is very well done. The measure of politicization reveals the waves of salience of the EU in Czech media, associated with accession, 2009, and refugee crisis (corresponding to the punctuated politicization thesis). This is perfectly plausible. It is also interesting to note only modest changes, over time, in polarization levels, which means that variation in politicization is to a large extent driven by salience alone.

More critically, I am not sure it is possible to derive from the data the observation that salience of the EU is generally low. One would probably need a cross-national comparison to state that, for example, 4% of articles for the EU is a lot or a little. But what the author rightly shows is that it is certainly not increasing.

Third, the explanatory analysis highlights – interestingly – the relatively similar levels of association of the EU politicization with institutional matters (Lisbon, Dublin) and with different substantial matters (Czech presidency, migration crisis). I just wish the text was more clearly written and better understandable here. It seems to me the data from 2009 quite disprove the authority transfer hypothesis, as the presidency overshadows Lisbon to some extent. Either way, clearly by far the most significant driver was the refugee crisis.

Fourth, the additional findings section brings very interesting results – in particular the worsening text sentiment of EU articles (as compared to the control group) and the significantly higher text complexity of EU articles (measured by length and Flash score). The charts depicting sentiment (13-16) are somewhat repetitive, but the message is ultimately quite clear.



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Minor criteria:

Perhaps the biggest downside of the thesis is the clarity of presentation. It really appears to me the writing could be improved. Sometimes editorial work at the level of individual sentences would be desirable, but more broadly the flow of the arguments is not always obvious.

For example, the Introduction is not particularly strong on presenting a broader picture of the discussion on politicization and outlining clearly what exactly the author does. It rather tends to provide a summary of the findings. Summarizing the results is all right, but it does not make much sense to present concrete statistics before the concepts (eg salience) are actually introduced and discussed. Also the actually applied empirical techniques used are not particularly well presented – what type of automated text analysis is performed, etc.

Strange numbering of subsections (Salience vs 5.1 in section 5).

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These are all relatively minor presentational things, but the packaging matters here. For a top quality thesis, the writing, style, and general presentation (including visual side of the thesis) are important.

Overall evaluation:

Filip Lukáš has written a very interesting and insightful thesis on the politicization of the EU in the Czech Republic, in particular with a focus on Czech media. The thesis is robust in design and measurement of politicization, and it is based on a solid theoretical framework (derived from the post-functionalist theory).

The main strength lies in that the thesis brings truly novel, original, and interesting empirical insights, based on a solid empirical analysis (measurement). The relative weakness is the clarity of presentation. The thesis is not simple to read even for a reader well familiar with the content.

Suggested grade: A/B Charles University [1.7 University of Konstanz]

Signature: