



## Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Jan Stehlik

Title: Prepared for the Worst: Counter-terrorism in the Visegrad

Programme/year: 2017

Author of Evaluation (external assessor): doc. Oldřich Bureš

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
<b>Major Criteria</b>			
	Research question, definition of objectives	<b>10</b>	9
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	<b>30</b>	20
	Methodology, analysis, argument	<b>40</b>	23
<i>Total</i>		<b>80</b>	52
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
	Sources	<b>10</b>	9
	Style	<b>5</b>	4
	Formal requirements	<b>5</b>	5
<i>Total</i>		<b>20</b>	18
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	70



## Evaluation

### Major criteria:

The thesis focuses on a hitherto relatively little studied topic of counterterrorism in the V4 countries. As such, albeit imperfect in terms of the execution of the selected research design (see below) and not always focusing on counterterrorism per se (as opposed to general security reforms, both legally and institutionally speaking), the thesis offers new empirical material in a structured manner. It also shows some interesting differences in the legal measures and institutional responses in the fight against terrorism in V4 countries.

However, the thesis does not fully live up to its stated goals due to several shortcomings. Firstly, although the selected method of analysis – causal-process tracing – is appropriate and the author discusses both its pluses and minuses, the actual case studies of V4 countries do not really offer all of the key causal-process observations singled out in sub-chapter 3.5: i.e. ‘comprehensive storylines’, ‘smoking gun observations’, and ‘confessions’. Only the ‘comprehensive storylines’ are covered for all countries, albeit their chronologies are not structured in the same way. For some countries, also some ‘smoking gun observations’ are provided, but only on ad hoc basis and only for some of the four stated hypotheses. ‘Confessions’ are not really offered for any countries and any hypotheses because the author did not conduct either interviews with relevant policy-makers or archival research.

Secondly, given the focus of the thesis on counterterrorism, the following points are also rather problematic:

a) The literature review is rather limited. Sub-chapter 2.2 with literature review on counterterrorism is very brief and limited just to game theory approaches, without any explanation/justification. This does not reflect the wide scope of existing counterterrorism literature. Sub-chapter 2.3 has similarly limited scope. Moreover, completely missing is at least a brief review of the key ongoing terrorism debates – regarding definition, causes and perceptions. All of these would better situate the discussed counterterrorism debates, as well as the stated hypotheses (especially H1) in the respective V4 countries.

b) The ‘comprehensive storylines’ of both the legal codes and institutional frameworks are incomplete due to the absence of any data and discussion of actual incidents and threats of terrorism in any of the V4 countries. Also missing is any data and discussion of the threat perceptions of terrorism in V4 countries, albeit this is directly linked to H1 and threat perceptions are also every now and then invoked as explanatory variables in the thesis.



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Thirdly, other problems include:

a) The ad hoc nature of testing of the stated hypotheses for different countries and their legal and institutional counterterrorism arrangements. This goes beyond the already mentioned lack of all three key causal-process observations – for some countries, many of the stated hypotheses are not discussed at all (e.g. H3+H4 for Hungarian Criminal Code changes), or they are simply dismissed in few sentences without any empirical evidence (e.g. H3+H4 for Czech Criminal Code changes).

b) Sub-chapter 6.1.3 suddenly offers an alternative conceptual explanation – Europeanization, but without much discussion of its many possible meanings that way go beyond the uni-directional downloading from EU to national level suggested in the thesis.

Minor criteria:

No major problems.

Overall evaluation:

I recommend this thesis for defence.

Suggested grade:

On the border between 2 and 3.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'B. M.' or similar.