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

PROTOCOL ON DIPLOMA THESIS ASSESSMENT
(Reviewer)

Name of the student: **Liliia Tenchurina**
Title: ***British Political Parties and immigration theme in their Brexit campaigns***

Reviewer (external reviewers including the address and position): Mgr. Jan Váška, Ph.D.

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

The dissertation sets out to analyse the use by five main British political parties of the immigration theme in what the author calls "their Brexit (alternately pre-Brexit) campaigns". Unfortunately the exact time frame of the thesis remains undefined and I am still uncertain whether the author actually meant to cover a bounded period before the Brexit referendum (and then just got carried away during the writing process; in terms of research design this would certainly be the more rigorous option), or, as the outcome suggests, a rather unspecified period extending up to the day of submission of the thesis. In any case, the research question as formulated – "Was immigration one of the key topics, which British political parties used in order to achieve their goals in Brexit campaigns" – as well as the hypothesis ("Some of the British parties formed a negative public image of the EU immigrants in their Brexit campaigns") would have been conspicuously trivial even at bachelor level.

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

The research topic is very salient and its choice is perfectly justified. I also do commend the author's effort to carry out the research on two largely independent but complementary levels, (1) building on existing academic literature and newspaper coverage as presented in Chapter 2, and (2) by original quantitative and qualitative text analysis as presented in Chapter 3.

I remain rather unconvinced about the choice, and especially the (non-) use by the author, of political marketing theory as the theoretical underpinning of the research. The author does present an overview of notable political marketing theory works in the literature review but that is about it. It appears that this is completely for garnishing purposes: there is no link whatsoever between this theory on one hand and neither the research strategy, nor the interpretation of findings on the other – seeing that the discussion in the Conclusions does not refer to the theory a single time!

As stated above the research question and the hypothesis are trivial and do not encourage any sort of in-depth research (and certainly do not require 70 pages of text to deliver the answer "Yes"). What was actually the basis for the formulation of the hypothesis: theory, or existing body of literature? It is my view that the hypothesis could (and should) have been easily "upgraded", for example to postulate correlation between the preferred outcome of the Brexit debate and the usage of the immigration theme in the political discourse.

The literature review (1.1) fails to fulfill its main role of critically assessing the existing body of research on the topics of British political parties and Brexit and British political parties and immigration/discourse on immigration. Only on the basis of this critical review the goals of the present dissertation should have been formulated.

The explanation of the methodology of the text analysis (Chapter 3) should have been considerably more elaborate. Not only the time frame remains unclear (the author gives for example no hint as to

what proportion of the body of texts analysed – 8000 words per party altogether – come from the referendum campaign period). I was also puzzled about the second and third category of key words: does the statistics show the total number of instances where e.g. the "issue" was used, or just the number of statements that collocate those nouns to the first-category words (migration etc.)? Any why did the author choose to quantify the occurrence of these particular words and not of others? And was the quantitative part of the analysis done manually or was it computer-assisted?

The quantitative part of the analysis could yield additional interesting results if the author had also tried to identify the variations in the usage of the selected key terms by individual parties by, to give an example, comparing the percentage of positively/negatively connotated/neutral statements containing the respective keyword (e.g. migration).

The author's insight into British politics is not entirely convincing – witness the characterization of (the dogmatically ideological Eurosceptic) Liam Fox as a Brexit supporter "because of migration issues" (p. 28).

The dissertation is built upon a sufficient body of literature but there are notable omissions too – the key (and accessible to FSV UK students) monographs on the Brexit referendum by Glencross (2016) and Clarke, Goodwin and Whitley (2017), or the 2017 article Goodwin and Milazzo for background on the salience of immigration issue. The inclusion of a list of abbreviations is laudable, however it is incomplete (NHS, AMA etc. are missing).

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

As I am not native English speaker, I am not competent to evaluate the linguistic level of the dissertation. It is my impression however that the author's level of proficiency in English, while generally fit for the purpose, at times somewhat negatively impacted upon the clarity of her argument.

There are flaws in the citation style. Very often, pagination is missing – even for direct quotes such as on p. 11! For news items, it does not suffice to state "Independent 2017" when there are, as the bibliography suggests, several articles published by this outlet in the given year. There is also repeated mismatch between the references and the list of literature: e.g. references on p. 25 put the years of publication of both Bale and Dorey at 2016, whereas in the list of literature it is 2010 and 2014 for Bale and 2017 for Dorey.

The list of literature itself is probably the least reader-friendly I have ever seen at a diploma thesis. Bibliography should be split according to source types, and individual items need to be visibly separated, too.

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

Despite all my reservations, and some of them are fundamental, I tend to think that this dissertation does merit a "Pass" grade. I especially appreciate the author's effort to carry out an original research project. While this research could and should have been done much more rigorously, some of the findings are both valid and valuable. The research objective – little ambitious as it was – was achieved.

5. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED DURING THE DEFENCE (one to three):

i) Could you explain the key you used for selecting the text excerpts quoted and commented upon in chapters 3.3 and subsequent? This is methodologically very important because it is precisely this section of the dissertation that forms the basis for the evaluation of the hypothesis.

ii) What was your strategy to ensure that the analysed body of Conservative Party texts is representative in terms of the party's internal divisions over Brexit?

iii) How do the empirical findings of your dissertation feed back into the theoretical/general debate on political marketing as introduced in the literature review?

iv) Concerning your empirical findings: How consistently does the political discourse of the five parties about (im)migration differentiate between free movement (within the EU/EEA) and migration from third countries? If there are differences among the parties in this respect, how would you explain those?

6. (NON-)RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTED GRADE
   (excellent, very good, good, unsatisfactory): **YES – GOOD (E)**

Date: 19 January 2018   Signature: