

## **Thesis Review**

**Author: Ivan Krupskyi**

**Title: Russia in the Ukrainian governmental discourse: From Crimea to Minsk II**

**Opponent: Ondřej Klípa**

The thesis by Ivan Krupskyi is one of the best student works I have read recently. In his thesis Ivan explores the Ukrainian governmental discourse portraying Russia through the lenses of two major online newspapers of the Ukrainian Government. The topic has been chosen very well since the Ukrainian war still plays an important role in international relations at the global level. It is thus useful to know what the official Ukrainian authorities think about Russia and the Russians and what they want the Ukrainian population to think about it.

Ivan proved to be able to use theories and methods too. He adheres to poststructuralism as a general theoretical approach. This allowed him to explain why he did not seek causal relations in his research but focused on interpretation instead. Unfortunately, the theoretical basis was addressed only in the introductory chapters but one cannot find many references to poststructural claims in the very analyses, not even in the conclusions. It is thus difficult to assess to which extent was the theory really helpful in his analyses.

He also presents well his methodological tools. Political Discourse Analysis was employed as the major method. However, the limited sample Ivan used for his analysis raises some concern. Only written media and from them only two online outlets were analyzed. This does not constitute any obstacle itself but one should be more careful in generalizing the outcomes of the analyses. Especially in the conclusion Ivan speaks plainly about „the Ukrainian governmental discourse” without considering that other utterances of the Government (especially spoken ones) might have been more diverse since the two outlets could have been steered and adjusted by the editors. It is of course dealt with in the introduction but some more critical observations and alternative interpretations should have been presented in the conclusion.

My last comment regards one of the findings Ivan brought forward that in my opinion deserves broader interpretation and elaboration. According to Ivan, both Ukraine and to a large extent also Russia do not perceive the war in Ukraine in ethnic terms. On the contrary, they both operate with the notion of “one nation” or at least very close brotherly or friendly nations. These non-nationalist discourses of course follow the way how most of “ordinary people” from both countries look at the war in Ukraine (tangible evidence is the absence of “ethnic cleansing” in neither of the states concerned). But I wonder how precisely the official discourse reflects that specific “non-ethnic” understanding of the war that distinguishes it from almost all other post-Soviet conflicts as well as from similar instances of war between culturally close groups (such as Croatians and Serbs). This topic could have been more deeply interpreted by Ivan. But it is just my suggestion, not objection. Nevertheless, my final opinion on the thesis is overwhelmingly positive.

Grade suggestion: A