

Name of the student:	Covadonga Solares Morales
Title of the thesis:	Understanding the future of the transatlantic relation: The impact of Donald Trump's populist foreign policy rhetoric on the US Congress' debates on NATO
Reviewer:	Dr hab. Magdalena Góra

### **1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD**

(relevance of the research question, research objective, literature review):

The student is analysing impact of the President Donald Trump populist tropes in foreign policy particularly concerning NATO on the bipartisan consensus in the US Congress. This tackles the important and significantly under researched theme of populist foreign policy and the long lasting impact of populist rhetoric. The student possess a very good overview of the US foreign policy and NATO as well as of transatlantic relations. Additionally, the research questions are interesting and novel and could shed a new light on the current issues of NATO position in transatlantic relations. In addition, the thesis contributes to relevant and yet not well researched issue of populist foreign policy.

### **2. ANALYSIS**

(methodology, argument, theoretical backing, appropriate work with sources):

Cova decided to employ qualitative discourse analysis which is a proper method for studying populist foreign policy. Due to the lack of detailed studies on D. Trump rhetorical approach to NATO the student decided to use a two-stage analysis where she firstly analysed a selected set of President Trump speeches in order to detect the key discursive tropes concerning NATO and secondly to analyse selected parliamentary debates to see to what extent these are used by legislators and by whom. The main aim was to understand to what extent the populist tropes are reproduced within the US political system. The main strength of the thesis is both the good and well researched theoretical basis of populist foreign policy and original empirical data. However, the methodology that was chosen – discursive analysis of parliamentary debates – had a potential that was not fully used by the student due to time constraints. The analysis in the US Congress only partially allows – based on official debates – to assess the extent of the contestation of NATO among the political parties. In addition, the nature of party politics in the US (their internal diversity, the multilevel constraints of the system etc.) would require more complex analysis to fully answer the question of the long-lasting impact of rhetoric of such a leader as D. Trump. This however was beyond the scope of the thesis.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS**

(persuasiveness, link between data and conclusions, achievement of research objectives):

The conclusions are correctly written linking the results with theoretical background of the thesis. There are attempts by the student to advance discussion on the role of populist leaders and the link between populism and foreign policy.

### **4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE**

(appropriate language, adherence to academic standards, citation style, layout):

The language of the thesis is correct even if sometimes shows stylistic weaknesses. The layout of the thesis is proper and clear. Citations, use of sources and bibliography is correctly applied,

### **5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT**

(strong and weak point of the dissertation, other issues)

I highly assess Cova's knowledge of the US foreign policy and transatlantic relations. The thesis strength is coming from developed theoretical reflection. In addition, the empirical material is novel and original and sheds a light into crucial areas of contemporary IR such as the position of the NATO. The methodology was correctly chosen with novel coding scheme adapted based on two-stage research. The key weakness of the thesis is that with employed method it was difficult to fully grasp the impact of populist rhetoric on US Congress narratives. However, even the limited findings that the student presented are already significant and interesting and prove Cova's ability to conduct research and contextualise findings in the wider context.

<b>Grade (A-F):</b>	A
Date: 14/07/2022	Signature: Magdalena Góra

classification scheme

Percentile	Prague		Krakow		Leiden		Barcelona	
	91-100 %	8,5%	5	6,7%	8,5-10	5,3%	9-10	5,5 %
B (81-90)	81-90 %	16,3%	4,5	11,7%	7,5-8,4	16,4%	8-8,9	11,0 %
C (71-80)	71-80 %	16,3%	4	20%	6,5-7,4	36,2%	7-7,9	18,4 %
D (61-70)	61-70 %	24%	3,5	28,3%			6-6,9	35,2 %
E (51-60)	51-60 %	34,9%	3	33,4 %	6-6,4	42,1 %	5-5,9	30,1 %

**Assessment criteria:**

Excellent (A): 'Outstanding performance with only minor errors';

Very good (B): 'Above the average standard but with some errors';

Good (C): 'Generally sound work but with a number of notable errors';

Satisfactory (D): 'Fair but with significant shortcomings';

Sufficient (E): 'Performance meets the minimum criteria';

Fail: 'Some/considerable more work required before the credit can be awarded'.