

Master's Thesis Evaluation Form

Student's name: Sophie Benson

Thesis title: **Populist Trends in Republican Presidential Nomination Acceptance Speeches**

Name of the supervisor: Anna Shavit

Name of the opponent: Tomáš Dvořák

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis? Please give your reasons for the suggested grade in detail below.

1. *Does the author show understanding of one or more theories, and use theory to generate a hypothesis or to make the problem area more understandable.*

Comments: Yes, the author of the text works with various theories of populism and media studies. She shows a clear ability to understand and apply theories.

2. *Is the research question articulated clearly and properly? Is the research question sufficiently answered in the conclusion?*

Comments: Rarely does it happen that students come up with a highly original topic and research concept for which there is data and which surprisingly yields new findings that complement existing theoretical concepts very well.

Sophie Benson is working on a trendy topic within political science and communication - populism. Her approach is quite unconventional in that she chooses a time period that is not automatically associated with populism and also in that she clearly articulates what she will explore and how.

American politics is often examined superficially without more profound insight into the logic of domestic politics. I particularly appreciate the method chosen here and the decision to examine the speeches.

And to answer the initial question. Yes. The research design is well structured, the questions are well formulated, and answers are provided.

3. *Is the thesis based on relevant research and literature and does it accurately summarize and integrate the information?*

Comments: The author works with relevant sources and logically with primary materials.

4. *What is the quality of the data or the other sources? Are the sample method, data collection, and data analysis appropriate?*

Comments: Selected data are original. Processing speeches can be challenging, especially given the detailed understanding of the contemporary context.

5. *Are the findings relevant to the research question? Are the conclusions of the thesis based on strong arguments?*

Comments: The author deeply understands the issues, and her findings are well presented.

6. *Are the author's thoughts distinguished unambiguously from the borrowed ideas?*

Comments: Yes. It is a highly original text. The author worked with great dedication and passion.

7. *Is the thesis containing original/innovative research (in terms of topic, approach, and/or findings)?*

Comments: I especially appreciate the original choice of theme and approach.

8. *What is the quality of style and other formal requirements?*

Comments: The author is a native speaker, so my evaluation should be taken carefully. However, she expresses herself skillfully, and the text is well written academically while remaining very readable.

The formal requirements are met.

9. *Are there any other strengths and weaknesses of the thesis, which are not included in the previous questions? Please list them if any.*

Comments: The most substantial aspect of the text is its original research. The thesis would work well on its own without the theoretical part. Conversely, the latter complements the text well, and the author consciously uses a part of the extensive theory of populism that fits the times. Much of the material cited is from the media, which again fits with the chosen material under examination - speeches. Since the theoretical part is extensive, I consider it manageable; however, it illustrates the events' political background so well.

10. *What topic do you suggest for the discussion in the thesis defence?*

Comments: Can you think of any other theoretical sources you should have cited or papers you could have built on in your research in the US?

11. *Declaration that the supervisor has read the result of the originality check in the system: [] Theses [] Turnitin [] Original (Urkund)*

Supervisor's comment on the originality check result: It is an original thesis

Overall assessment of the thesis:

(Please, state clearly whether the thesis is or is not recommended for a defence and write the main reasons for the recommendation).

Proposed grade:

(A- B: excellent, C-D: very good, E: good, F: fail)

A

Date: May 24, 2023

Signature:

