

MASTER'S THESIS EXAMINER REPORT

IEPS – International Economic and Political Studies

Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Thesis title:	Relationship Between Citizen and State in the Countries of Former Yugoslavia: Interdisciplinary Investigations
Student's name:	Nikola Tasic
Referee's name:	Tomáš Halamka

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	50	40
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	15	10
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	15	10
Total		80	60
Minor Criteria			
	Sources, literature	10	10
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	5	4
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	5	4
Total		20	18
TOTAL		100	78

Plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score: 1%

Reviewer's commentary according to the above criteria:

The thesis concentrates on positive and negative aspects prominent in ex-Yugoslav citizen's perception of their respective states and related topics of their political loyalty and emigration. The object of study is an intriguing phenomenon definitely worthy of closer study. The thesis offers multiple interesting and well-supported insights regarding several of its subtopics and is typically well-researched and informative when it puts forward a more particular analysis. There are, however, some problems with the assumptions on the general theoretical and methodological level.

First, the thesis introduces and develops its own theoretical framework called "Bipolar Theory," which operates with "negative" and "positive" poles and points out a tension between them. Such an attempt at theoretical innovation and creativity in its design definitely deserves appreciation and is not without merit. Nevertheless, the identification of factors within these poles is not unproblematic, not only because the reasons behind the selection of the individual variables within the poles were not discussed, and the selection thus appears deliberate. The key issue here is that the thesis considers positive factors (ethnicity, territory, religion and symbols) to be primarily derived from "pre-political identity based

patriotism”, while the selected negative factors (corruption, low SES and poor public services) are driven by “social, economic and political factors”. The author indicates that the particular factors stem *primarily* from these roots, but other possible sources are not taken into consideration. Such an assumption makes the whole analysis reductive because it effectively excludes political (as opposed to primordial) forms of patriotism as well as possible provision of positive political, social and economic goods by the state from the analysis.

As a result, potential stances of ex-Yugoslav citizens of either 1) appreciating their states for reasons other than “pre-political” or 2) disliking the societal emphasis of primordial patriotism are not considered. It almost seems that the theoretical framework tacitly builds on the assumption that ex-Yugoslav states are corrupt, dysfunctional and people do not emigrate from them almost solely because of their primordial patriotism. This would itself be an interesting hypothesis to test, but it instead serves as a latent presupposed assumption guiding the theoretical framework, which in turn sets the tone of the following analysis. This point is aggravated by the exclusion of Slovenia from the analysis, as Slovenia might have precisely been a candidate for a case featuring *political* patriotism and functioning state services. On the other hand, it is fair to say that at least some of these considerations are eventually reflected in the assessment of hypothesis 2.

If we abstract from these theoretical and some formal (such as missing paging and indication of particular pages/chapters in citations) issues, we receive a decent piece of academic research. The thesis demonstrates awareness of debates regarding the key concepts and puts forward often illuminating analyses of factors within both poles in four Yugoslav countries while all of it is backed by a respectable amount of literature. These analyses, which constitute a majority of the text, are conducted by research of multiple objects of interest: political party and its strategy, speech of a politician, narrative pushed forward by a museum of history, as well as multiple opinion polls and other empirical data all appear in the thesis at some point. Sometimes, the level of detail was perhaps even unnecessary, and some space and researcher’s energy might have better been invested in theoretical considerations, especially when the thesis introduces a brand-new theory.

In sum, the thesis contains non-negligible (mainly theoretical) issues which predetermine and limit the main argument. However, on the level of more particular analysis, the thesis usually puts forward solid and informed research and eventually presents some interesting and relevant findings and policy recommendation.

Proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F): C

Suggested questions for the defence are:

Could the third hypothesis regarding emigration potentially be disapproved? (Theoretically, if the positive factors prevailed over the negative, the people would not decide to emigrate in the first place).

I recommend the thesis for final defence.

Referee Signature

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Quality standard
91 – 100	A	= outstanding (high honor)
81 – 90	B	= superior (honor)
71 – 80	C	= good
61 – 70	D	= satisfactory
51 – 60	E	= low pass at a margin of failure
0 – 50	F	= failing. The thesis is not recommended for defence.