



## Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Jacob Condran

Title: Refugee Interest Groups in the Czech Republic and Issue Framing in Light of the War in Ukraine

Programme/year: International Relations/2024

Author of Evaluation (second reader): Aliaksei Kazharski

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
<b>Major Criteria</b>			
	Research question, definition of objectives	<b>10</b>	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	<b>30</b>	21
	Methodology, analysis, argument	<b>40</b>	23
<i>Total</i>		<b>80</b>	54
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
	Sources	<b>10</b>	7
	Style	<b>5</b>	4
	Formal requirements	<b>5</b>	5
<i>Total</i>		<b>20</b>	16
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	70



## Evaluation

### Major criteria:

### Minor criteria:

### Assessment of plagiarism:

The overall similarity according to the Turnitin protocol is 30%. I could see no indications of plagiarism.

### Overall evaluation:

The thesis addresses an interesting and highly relevant topic. The research problem is well-defined and the thesis is –at least to some extent – well situated in the literature. It is also generally well-written although some essential things are clearly missing from the text. For example, a (refugee) interest group which is the central concept of the analysis is only defined on p. 22. Until then the reader is left in the dark about what exactly the author means by this term, which in turn makes the preceding theoretical discussion much more difficult to grasp. Specific examples of “refugee interest groups” and of the ways in which they might have developed and declined would be useful here.

Also, when it comes to the social constructivist wing of the analysis the theory of discourse and the research design could be more thoroughly discussed. On the side of the research design, I could not really understand what the actual scope of the processed discourse was. In the author’s defense, however, I would add that this is a rather typical problem of studies written up in the discourse analysis genre. But nevertheless, it would need to be fixed for the research design to fly. The quotes that the author discusses in the text are relevant and indicative, and I particularly enjoyed the treatment of M. Zeman’s chameleon-style opportunism. But from the way the research design is written up it remains unclear to the reader how far the analysis has actually gone beyond finding these particular quotes. This becomes a particularly salient issue in light of the fact that the study makes causal claims with respect to the impact of the said discourse on the society. If one wishes to make such bold claims, I would suggest perhaps some of form of quantitative analysis, or alternatively a more comprehensive qualitative survey of the political discourses.



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This brings me to my main point. In my opinion, the main problem with the thesis stems from the way it chooses to combine different methodologies. The author attempts a combination of a positivist causal analysis which puts forth a set of hypotheses with a social constructivist study. The link between them is in the alleged impact of the discourse on the dynamics of the organizational “ecology.” In principle, this is a logical assumption in this context but one that still remains to be proven empirically. Correlations, as we know, are not necessarily always causations. For sure, plugging a causal claim into a social constructivist analysis is never an easy task. It is always very difficult to argue convincingly that a discourse, an idea, or a norm directly *caused* something (rather than made it possible or created preconditions for it). But if one chooses to venture in that direction, it needs to be empirically well-founded. In this case, I suppose, it would require some form of process-tracing, some sociological engagement with the social actors in the Czech Republic to get a grasp of the extent to which political discourses might have influenced the choice to establish or not to establish a refugee interest group. However, this would require a research strategy that does rely only on quantitative data from agencies. My hunch is that some interviews or focus groups could perhaps help to document a direct causal impact.

**Suggested grade: ‘C’ (70/100)**

**Signature:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alku'.