BACHELOR'S THESIS EXAMINER REPORT
PPE – Bachelor's in Politics, Philosophy and Economics
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Thesis title:	Populism in the Slovak Republic and its Threats
Student's name:	Samuel Blecharž
Referee's name:	Miloš Brunclík

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	**50**	24
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	**15**	7
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	**15**	7
Total		*80*	38
Minor Criteria			
	Sources, literature	**10**	5
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	**5**	3
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	**5**	5
Total		*20*	13
TOTAL		*100*	51

Plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score:
[NB:] If the plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score is above 15%, the reviewer has to include his/her assessment of the originality of the reviewed thesis in his/her review.

Reviewer's commentary according to the above criteria (min. 1800 characters including spaces when recommending a passing grade, min. 2500 characters including spaces when recommending a failing grade):

The bachelor's thesis suffers from several significant deficiencies. First, it is focused on several complex issues which cannot be satisfactorily analyzed within a single bachelor's thesis. The aims formulated on p. 12 are overambitious: ["… to define populism and its core principles, distinguishing it from other political ideologies…. to document both historical and contemporary manifestations of populism in Slovak politics, providing a detailed account of how populist movements have evolved and influenced the political landscape. … to assess the impact of populist governance on the principles and institutions of liberal democracy in Slovakia. …"]. These aims are formulated too broadly to allow for a reasonable analysis providing valuable findings. Instead, the bachelor's thesis resembles a compilation of some findings and conclusions. Second, even though most of the arguments appear solid and convincing, these are not based on the author's own research. The thesis is a superficial collection of various claims and findings advanced by

previous literature. To put it more sharply, the thesis does not bring any novel evidence. I do not think it makes much sense to debate whether Fico's government is a threat to liberal democracy, as any political observer would have an immediate answer without much analysis. Even though I can agree that corrupted elites is the biggest problém (p. 30), it is far from novel. I would recommend formulating more intriguing research questions that would allow the author to reveal something new or take a novel perspective on Slovak populism. Third, the thesis does not sufficiently refer to resources. In many cases, the author makes important claims and provides facts without providing references to respective resources. References are put incorrectly: often only the author's surname without publication date and pages is provided.

All in all, the thesis is clearly a below-average piece of academic work, being at the margin of failure. Samuel clearly did a sloppy job. The thesis deserves substantial improvements in the areas of aims, theory, methodology, and analysis. In any case, the final grade shall depend on his performance at the defense of the thesis.

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

Suggested questions for the defence are:

Populism is generally described as an anti-establishment movement targeting corrupted elites. How can we interpret the fact that R. Fico established his 4th cabinet and his party was clearly involved in many corruption scandals. Still, it keeps advancing its populist rhetoric successfully ?

I conditionally 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.