



## Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: László Kránitz

Title: Political level cooperation between Visegrad countries: factors and narratives

Programme/year: MAIN 2024

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Viera Martinková

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
<b>Major Criteria</b>			
	Research question, definition of objectives	<b>10</b>	7
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	<b>30</b>	15
	Methodology, analysis, argument	<b>40</b>	15
<i>Total</i>		<b>80</b>	37
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
	Sources	<b>10</b>	6
	Style	<b>5</b>	4
	Formal requirements	<b>5</b>	4
<i>Total</i>		<b>20</b>	14
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	52



## Evaluation

### Major criteria:

The thesis poses two research questions: “*How was the collective Visegrad identity formed after the 2015 migration crisis?*” and “*How did this new identity influence the decision-making of the Visegrad countries in the EU between 2015 and 2022?*” Unfortunately, the formulation of these research questions already contains debatable assumptions on a) the existence of a collective Visegrad identity, b) its reconstruction as a consequence of the migration crisis 2015, and c) the impact of this identity on the stances of Visegrad countries on migration.

The premise of the thesis is based on the claim that the migration crisis 2015 represents a “critical juncture”, as described by Risse, leading to a substantial change in the identities of Visegrad countries. However, the author introduces little to no argument to support this claim; he simply asserts that the V4 countries faced an external threat during the crisis (p.2). While the theoretical chapter deals with social constructivism and identity, it starts with a rather broad and unnecessary introduction to constructivism and then cites different works on identity. Still, it fails to discuss identity formation or changes in identity concisely. Therefore, it cannot work as a useful framework for the empirical part of the thesis.

The methodological chapter is dedicated to discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis specifically. While it presents a good introduction to the topic, it also does not serve the purpose of creating a usable analytical framework for the thesis. The author claims that he will “*analyse the speeches of certain politicians... based on Van Dijk’s sociocognitive approach... (which ) would require the analysis of the different discursive elements along with the social structures of the Visegrad countries*” and include citizens’ perceptions (p.14). More specifically, he claims that the analysis “*will be semantic, since I will try and analyse the meaning of certain sentences, emotions and words in different texts*”. (p 14).



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However, the author fails to deliver on these plans in the empirical chapter. He claims that the Central European identity *"has been pushed into the background"* while they focused on the EU accession process (p.27) without showing that it existed in the first place. The following part shows Visegrad cooperation as a pragmatic choice, not a question of identity. While the next chapter presents some quotes of politicians from Visegrad countries delivered during and since the migration crises that use common identity or defence of European identity as a main argument, it tries to present a far more unified picture than one we would see if the author made a broader selection of politicians and their speeches. Similarly, it misrepresents the stances of V4 countries on migration policies and specifically the quotas, which also changed with changes in government in these countries.

There is also no reasoning behind the selection of politicians/speeches analysed; the author favours the more nationalist or populist representatives. While in the case of Orbán, Fico, Babiš or Duda, this reflects the offices they held, others from the examined period (2015-2022), such as Zuzana Čaputová, are excluded. Ending the research with the year of 2022 also conveniently leads to the exclusion of the representatives of the current Czech and Polish governments (except for M.Bek). Only in the conclusion the author mentions that he ended the examined period with 2022 *"as following the broke of the Ukrainian-Russian war and the government changes in the Czech Republic and in Poland meant that the Visegrad countries shifted away in many issues, which obviously hinders the promotion of the Visegrad identity"* (p.56). The author does not conduct actual discourse analysis, but merely uses handpicked quotes to illustrate his point.

**Minor criteria:**

The thesis would have benefited from thorough proofreading before final submission to improve language, especially sentence structure and referencing. Even though the thesis is generally well-referenced, the references are sometimes missing in the text (such as paraphrasing Wendt without a proper reference on p. 7).



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**Assessment of plagiarism:**

The Turnitin score of 33% is due to direct quotes and references; no plagiarism was detected.

**Overall evaluation:**

The author started writing his thesis believing that there was a substantial change in identity, and it led to a change in policies and selected speeches. To support this, he included quotes and arguments that fit this belief without actually critically examining his own assumptions. The use of theoretical and methodological framework is limited. Despite significant shortcomings, the thesis fulfils the minimal criteria for a diploma thesis, and I recommend it for defence.

During the defence, the author should justify the selection of speeches and the selected time period. He should also explain how this approach and the reasoning behind ending the analysis with 2022 fits with the constructivist discussion of identity or the notion of “critical juncture”. What is the Central European identity now, and is it being reconstructed again?

**Suggested grade:**

**E**

**Signature:**