

Thesis review: Kristián Földes. *Identity and state action – The case of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia during the European Schengen crisis*

Reviewed by: Dr. Aliaksei Kazharski, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

The presented thesis is a solid piece of independent and original empirical research that successfully fulfills the basic criteria for a Ph.D. dissertation, and therefore I recommend it for defense without any reservations. The thesis is well-structured and well-written, it has a robust methodology and research design. In its present form, it is likely to be useful to both area studies specialists and scholars dealing with politicization and securitization of migration and, perhaps, somewhat less so, but also to students of identity formation.

There are three major themes pursued in the thesis that are also naturally related. These are identity formation, the social construction of migration in political discourse, and the interlinkage between the latter and national policies. This is where the thesis also connects conceptually with the regional integration theorizing and the postfunctionalist agendas. On the empirical side the thesis is a valuable contribution in terms of combining quantitative analysis with a qualitative one and providing many direct quotes in the text. This is something that allows readers who do not have a command of Czech, Hungarian or Slovak to become better acquainted with the discursive strategies of different political actors in the region.

The final vision of the thesis has also seen improvement which should definitely help advance the research project to the next stage and make it a published book. The author strengthened the thesis with a

discussion of the existing literature on the V4 and the regional ramifications of the 2015-2016 European “migration crisis” (pp. 25-33), which was largely missing from the earlier draft of the thesis. The author also explained why he used the term “identities” rather than images to designate the discursive portrayals of migrants by the V4 politicians. Though my understanding of identity as a concept is different, I respect the right of the author to produce his own definitions.

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