



Master's Thesis Review: Supervisor's Evaluation Form

Student's name: **Danijela Nandi**

Thesis title: **Yugoslavian Phantom Identity**

Name of the supervisor: Martin Hájek

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis? Please give your reasons for the suggested grade in detail below.

1. *Does the author show an understanding of one or more theories, and use theory to generate a hypothesis or to make the problem area more understandable?*

Comments: Yes. The research is framed by social identity theory and partly by collective memory studies, both of which are well explained.

2. *Is the research question articulated clearly and properly? Is the research question sufficiently answered in the conclusion?*

Comments: The research question is derived from the analogy with the medical syndrome of phantom pain. The author explores whether a similar syndrome can exist in the sphere of social (state, national) identity when the society on which the identity is based no longer exists. Is the pain of identity that people experience also a phantom, or is it just a bittersweet nostalgia for the past? The double metaphorical basis of the research question seems to be both its strength and its weakness, because phantom identity is both easy and difficult to describe. Easy because it is evident in everyday practice, difficult because it is diffusely dispersed in other types of identity components.

3. *Is the thesis based on relevant research and literature and does it accurately summarize and integrate the information?*

Comments: Yes.

4. *What is the quality of the data or the other sources? Are the methods (sampling, data collection and data analysis) appropriate?*

Comments: The sample of ten respondents is a convenience sample; it covers certain characteristics of the post-Yugoslavian diaspora well (gender), some less well (age: no person over 60, no citizens of Montenegro, North Macedonia or Slovenia, no person with low education). However, in terms of the phenomenon, i.e. phantom identity, the sample is diverse enough. The interviews were skilfully conducted and the thematic data analysis is appropriate and sufficiently described.



5. *Are the findings relevant to the research question? Are the conclusions of the thesis based on strong arguments?*

Comments: The main findings are to be found in the detailed analysis of the interviews. Regarding the existence of a phantom identity, in my opinion the analogy with phantom pain does not work. The Yugoslav identity, even though it refers to a non-existent state, is a practical social tool rather than a source of pain. A tool that allows ex-Yugoslavs to communicate and build friendly relationships based on a particular sense of belonging that cannot be reduced to *yugonostalgia*. So yes, the findings are relevant to the research question and the arguments are supported by the data.

6. *Evaluate the progress of the thesis and the innovative and original contribution of the author (e.g., in terms of topic, approach, and/or findings). Was the work regularly consulted?*

Comments: The thesis was consulted regularly and I followed its progress for almost two years. Danijela introduced the topic because of her personal interest and my work consisted of suggesting literature on social identity and methodology. The data generation and analysis were largely done independently, while I was helpful in the interpretation phase, mainly because of the author's personal involvement in the phenomenon under study. The collaboration was smooth and it was a pleasure for me to supervise the thesis.

7. *Are there any other strengths and weaknesses of the thesis, which are not included in the previous questions? Please list them if any.*

Comments: No.

8. *What topic do you suggest for the discussion in the thesis defence?*

Comments: Due to the sample limitation, do you think that the results would also apply to older people (60+), less educated people and other former Yugoslav nationalities (Slovenians, Macedonians, Montenegrins or even Albanians)?

Do you think that the phantom identity survives in the inhabitants of the former Yugoslavian territories? Or is it just a diasporic phenomenon?

9. *Declaration that the supervisor has read the result of the originality check in the system: [] Theses [x] Turnitin [] Original (Urkund)*

Supervisor's comment on the originality check result: No issues detected.

Overall assessment of the thesis:

The thesis raises an interesting and relevant research question, is based on sound empirical research and data analysis, and has a perfect formal elaboration. It meets all the requirements for a diploma thesis. I therefore recommend it for defence.

Proposed grade: B – very good



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Date: 8 June 2024

Signature: