

Diploma Thesis Review

Andrés Pernía López: *Democratic Solidarity within the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic, The Case of the Venezuelan Political Crisis 2017–2022.*

The thesis under review presents an interesting study of Czech foreign policy, more specifically it focuses on analyzing it using the concept of democratic solidarity. The author focuses on this phenomenon utilizing the case of the Venezuelan political crisis and instability in the past half a decade. Despite the human rights orientation of the Czech foreign policy since 1989 has been discussed in public and political discourses many times, in academic writing it has not been content of many comprehensive analysis so far. Undertaking such research might be useful also from the point of view that it could be a part of answering bigger question such as whether small states pursue more value based or consequentialist foreign policy comparing to the great powers or at least middle-sized states.

First, the author explains his methodology (process-tracing) in chapter two. This is followed by theoretical chapter, where we can find detailed description of the concept of democratic solidarity. Chapter four explores the historical salience of human rights discourse within Czech foreign policy. Finally, the fifth chapter deals with the analysis of the case of Czech foreign policy towards Venezuela between 2017–2022.

The reviewed thesis has set clear research goals and the whole work is logically structured. The author works attempts to utilize established methodology, i.e., explanatory outcome process tracing, which enables him to better answer the research questions. The author also uses sufficient amount of primary and secondary sources. The level of English writing is also acceptable, with some occasional language mistakes. On the other hand, two problematic aspects of the reviewed thesis are listed below:

- a) The thesis in general exhibits nice grasp and description of methodology, but there should more in the methodological part specific to the case, i.e. there needs to be more explanation, how the causal mechanism should work in case of Czech foreign policy towards Venezuela. One may ask whether process tracing really occurred in the analytical part of the thesis, because lot of the information provided about Czech Republic's policy towards Maduro regime are kind of general, without going into bigger detail of the decision-making process.

- b) There is a number of places in the thesis, where the author resorts to cite his sources in quite general manner, i.e. he references the whole book or article, without using specific pagination. That is acceptable in cases, where you reference the message or main idea of the works cited, but all other cases need more specific references.

Despite some of the problems in the above-mentioned points, I conclude this review by stating that A. P. López work has all the necessary qualities for successfully written MA thesis and I thus recommend it for a defense.

Hradec Králové, 16. 8. 2023

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