MUNI
FSS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & EUROPEAN POLITICS

Thesis title:	**Brexit in European Integration Theory: Liberal Intergovernmentalism, Neofunctionalism and Constructivism**
Author name:	**Mark Szabo**

Reviewer's report

1. **The argument of the thesis is clearly defined and presented OR the policy paper offers clearly presented recommendations.**

Criteria met fully	Criteria met with minor deficiencies	**Criteria met with major deficiencies**	Criteria not met

Commentary: I did not find out what is the added value if three (in fact randomly chosen) theories are compared in their ability to explain Brexit. Nor there are clear criteria explaining why these three particular approaches, neither existing work on theories and Brexit is reviewed – thus, it is not clear which gap in literature this thesis aims to fill or what kind of research puzzle it wants to solve. As this is a research thesis, I consider such approach as major shortcoming of the piece.

Thesis meets the criteria of the chosen format. Section chosen based on format:

2.1. Research paper:

a. Thesis follows the recommended structure

Criteria met fully	**Criteria met with minor deficiencies**	Criteria met with major deficiencies	Criteria not met

Commentary: I do miss a chapter that would try to put thesis´s findings into up-to-date research context – that means a chapter which would engage with what we already know about Brexit theoretization.

b. Thesis clearly defines the research question/hypothesis

Criteria met fully	Criteria met with minor deficiencies	**Criteria met with major deficiencies**	Criteria not met

Commentary: RQ is formulated in purely exploratory way. It does not explain why a reader should be interested in three theories´ ability to explain Brexit. There are no solid reasons why exactly these three theories are interesting and what can be learnt from RQ and three sub-RQs. Main goal of the thesis (p. 11) is not reflected in main RQ and three sub-RQ (p. 12).

c. Thesis reflects existing literature on the topic

Criteria met fully	Criteria met with minor deficiencies	**Criteria met with major deficiencies**	Criteria not met

Commentary: There is a chapter on literature review, but it is unclear to what kind of problem (or research puzzle) it wants to speak. As this thesis wants to compare how can various theories explain Brexit, I would expect systematic critical overview of existing work on the

issue – which theories have tried to explain Brexit, what they have found, how these findings have been accepted by the community. But this is not the case, theoretical reflections on Brexit are rather anecdotally mentioned.

d. Thesis offers new insights while explaining their novelty

Criteria met fully	Criteria met with minor deficiencies	Criteria met with major deficiencies	**Criteria not met**

Commentary: I do not think so. Thesis´s design suffers from major problems (see point E), hence its findings are highly problematic and not relevant. The major finding of this thesis – each theory can explain some aspect(s) of Brexit – is banal and flawed (theories are not compared on one set of data).

e. Analysis is executed thoroughly, correctly (according to the chosen method and data relevant to the research question), and with reference to theoretical expectations

Criteria met fully	Criteria met with minor deficiencies	Criteria met with major deficiencies	**Criteria not met**

Commentary: I do have three important comments here as this thesis suffers from several major weaknesses. Firstly, there is no operationalization of what is actually understood as "Brexit". It could be process of negotiations between EU and UK. It could be process prior June 2016 referendum. It could be domestic UK dimension of it. It could be combination of several issues. Anyway, if a thesis aims at such abstract topic as theories are, it has to be very clear on what is understood as dependent and independent variables. Otherwise it looks as very problematic and purely random commentary on issues which have been chosen on non-transparent basis. Actually, the analysis compares various aspects of Brexit in case of various theories. The question however is what is an added value of such comparison? Secondly, if Brexit is not operationalized, no standard data are present. Ability of each theory is evaluated on different events and facts – this is as one would compare abilities of three athletes using 100 meters run, javelin throw and triple jump…Thirdly, the thesis fails to address its main goal (p. 11) – to what extent can three theories explain Brexit as a crisis – as it does not specify a) what EU crisis actually is, b) how can each particular theory explain that a crisis happen. By the way, this goal is not reflected in the conclusion at all…Fourthly, no theoretical assumption (what would particular theory expect regarding Brexit) is expressed and subsequently evaluated.

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2. Structure (logical structure of sentences, paragraphs, and chapters)

Criteria met fully	Criteria met with minor deficiencies	Criteria met with major deficiencies	Criteria not met

3. Style (elocution, use of academic style)

Criteria met fully	Criteria met with minor deficiencies	Criteria met with major deficiencies	Criteria not met

4. **Sources and citing (evidence is properly cited according to ethical rules, correct use of chosen citation style, correct bibliography)**

Criteria met fully	Criteria met with minor deficiencies	**Criteria met with major deficiencies**	Criteria not met

Commentary: In-text citations do not follow any standard as in some cases full names of authors and books´ titles are included. There are also problems with text formatting (some chapters and paragraphs are block formatted, some left-centered) and list of references (different styles for various entries).

5. **Writing process (ability to show writing initiative while regularly consulting with supervisor and implement comments). SUPERVISOR ONLY RUBRIC.**

Criteria met fully	Criteria met with minor deficiencies	Criteria met with major deficiencies	Criteria not met

Commentary: NA.

6. **Thesis extent fits within the recommended range (8,500 – 10,000 words including footnotes, bibliography, without appendices)**

Meets	Does not meet

7. **Questions and overall commentary**

During the defense, I would encourage Mark Szabó to explain:

a) *How has he chosen these three particular theories? What were criteria used for cases´ selection?*
b) *What is the "crisis moment" (or what is "crisis") in Brexit case from EU perspective?*

8. **Recommended evaluation**

A	B	C	**D**	E	F

In: Troubsko
Day of: 22. 5. 2020

Signed: Petr Kaniok