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FILOZOFICKÁ

## Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

### MA thesis: opponent's report

The student's name: Chukwudi Chukwu

The title of the thesis: What should be the Standard for Evaluating Political Representatives?

The supervisor: Matej Cívik

The opponent: Sylvie Bláhová

#### I. Formal criteria

	yes	partially	no
<b>1. The overall project:</b> - the thesis corresponds to the proposed topic - the topic is outlined adequately and not overly broadly	X		
<b>2. Methodical and systematic quality</b> - the text is logically and clearly structured	X		
<b>3. Introduction and conclusion</b> - the introduction duly states the aims and projected steps of the thesis, the state of the arts in the chosen topic, and the key works of existing scholarship - the conclusion adequately summarizes and evaluates the problem, and states the author's position and contribution	X		
<b>4. The author met all the formal requirements of a Master's Thesis:</b> - statement of the topic, the declaration, Introduction, the body of the work, Conclusion, Summary - word count/number of pages is appropriate	X		

*Further comments*

I have no major comments on the formal criteria. The thesis is well structured and written in a very comprehensible way.

<b>II. Contents-related criteria</b>	<b>yes</b>	<b>partially</b>	<b>no</b>
1. The thesis shows the author's comprehension of the problem	X		
2. <b>Cohesion and continuity of the text:</b> - is satisfactory - the argumentation is adequate and does not lack foundation	X		
3. The thesis works with <b>relevant resources</b>	X		
4. <b>Working with resources:</b> - the thesis clearly shows that the author has worked with relevant academic literature and theses and arguments presented there - the author properly introduced their referred resources, compared, paraphrased, and cited them - clearly distinguished their own ideas and claims from those made by the cited authors	X		
5. The thesis is a <b>philosophical text:</b> - the author proved to be able to work analytically with concepts and ideas - the author did not only summarise or retell (in different words) the used resources - the thesis is not overburdened with non-philosophical (biographical, historical, etc.) contents		X	
6. The thesis shows the <b>author's own contribution and individual framing</b> of the topic		X	

Chukwudi Chukwu has selected the important topic of political representation, aiming to apply the conceptual framework of political representation to a practical example—Nigeria. This places his work at the intersection of political philosophy and political science. Despite the potential challenges associated with applying theoretical concepts to real-life cases, the author has done a commendable job, presenting a well-structured and comprehensible thesis.

In the theoretical part, Chukwu draws on relevant authors and provides a thorough description of various approaches to political representation. Regarding the section on political representation in Nigeria, the author offers a detailed overview of political representation from Nigeria's independence to the present. While I understand the author's rationale for including this historical account—it certainly helps the reader grasp the development of political representation in Nigeria—I am uncertain about its precise purpose, particularly in relation to the central, third part of the thesis. In this section, the author seems to focus exclusively on the Fourth Republic without making comparisons to previous forms of political representation. This raises the question: when evaluating the history of political representation in post-independence Nigeria, are there any fundamental changes worth noting?

Regarding the theoretical tools used to evaluate political representation in Nigeria, the author mentions institutional and ethical evaluative standards. For the institutional framework, Chukwu references several scholars (Lauermann, Pitkin, Williams, and Young) and explores the extent to which their approaches apply to Nigeria, as well as the potential obstacles involved. While his consideration of individual approaches is solid, I find the lack of a comprehensive assessment of the institutional evaluative framework for political representation in Nigeria to be a significant gap. By contrast, the author provides such an assessment in his discussion of the ethical evaluative framework, where he draws on Suzanne Dovi's theory.

In addition to these formal evaluations of the author's argument, I have several conceptual questions I would be interested in having the author address during the defense. In the theoretical section, Chukwu primarily relies on Hanna Pitkin's conception of democratic representation but also references classical theories by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. In this context, I would like to ask how the author conceives of the concept of "the people" (who subsequently form the constituency to be represented), particularly in relation to sovereignty and law. Specifically, are representatives authorized by the people above the law, as Hobbes suggests? Or is the relationship more Rousseauian, in the sense that the people form the general will and the sovereign—or representatives—must act according to this will? Pitkin appears to synthesize both approaches in her theory. I would like to know how the author interprets these three concepts—people, sovereignty, and law—in his analysis.

Another issue I would like to raise concerns structural injustices in the context of political representation. The author briefly touches on this topic when referencing Williams's theory, and it is also connected to the principle of proportionality. However, I would like to ask: according to the author, how can such structural injustices, which inevitably affect the character of political representation, be addressed or mitigated?

Finally, I am curious about a topic that, in my view, the author does not sufficiently reflect on: elections as the mechanism for choosing representatives. Although Chukwu mentions INEC as the organization responsible for assessing the quality of elections, I am more interested in the electoral process itself and the electoral system, both of which can fundamentally shape the level of representativeness. According to the author, how significant is the electoral system for the quality of representation, both generally and in the specific case of Nigeria?

**III. Language and grammar****yes   partially   no**

	<b>yes</b>	<b>partially</b>	<b>no</b>
1. The thesis is flawless <b>grammatically and stylistically</b> and in other related respects (such as avoiding typos or unfinished sentences)	X		
2. The thesis is written in a proper <b>academic language</b>	X		
3. <b>Terminology</b> - the thesis uses its terminology with comprehension - it uses its terminology as needed and introduces its terms as needed	X		
4. <b>References, citations and notes</b> - referencing is adequate - the thesis uses a suitable citation format and sticks with it - footnotes/endnotes are used properly	X		
5. <b>Citing</b> - citations are neither too scarce nor overexcessive - quotations are sensibly chosen and illuminating	X		
6. <b>Graphics</b> - the thesis uses a suitable font, style of TOC, headings, paragraph styles, and so forth	X		

*Further comments*

Grammatically, thesis is well written, containing only minor typos.

**IV. Resources used****yes   partially   no**

1. a sensible and topic-adequate selection of primary texts	X		
2. a sensible and topic-adequate selection of secondary resources	X		

*Further comments***Further recommendations:**

See my comment in part II.

**Cooperation between the student and the supervisor** (to be stated by the supervisor):

**Overall evaluation:**

The thesis is fit for defence: yes

Suggested grade: B

**Proposed questions and topics for the defence discussion:**

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In Pardubice, date: 26/11/2024

Opponent: Sylvie Bláhová