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Thesis review form

Title of the thesis: *Costly Signaling Theory of Pilgrimage: The case study of pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela*

Author of the thesis: Radim Chvaja

Thesis Advisor and Reviewer

Thesis Advisor:	Martin Lang
Reviewer:	Jordan Kiper

Type of thesis

Bachelor's thesis (Major), Bachelor's thesis (Minor), Master's thesis (Major), Master's thesis (Minor), Dissertation (Doctoral thesis)

Assessment criteria, allocated points and overall evaluation

Assessment criteria are divided into three groups: 1) fulfilment of the assignment, 2) formal requirements and language, and 3) content. Please allocate a number of points according to the allocation criteria for each of the groups and write them in the table. The number of points allocated by the assessor for a given criterion roughly corresponds to the ECTS rating scale as follows: **40 point criterion:** 40-38 = A, 37-33 = B, 32-28 = C, 27-23 = D, 22-20 = E, 19-0 = F; **30 point criterion:** 30-29 = A, 28-25 = B, 24-21 = C, 20-17 = D, 16-15 = E, 14-0 = F; **20 point criterion:** 20-19 = A, 18-17 = B, 16-14 = C, 13-12 = D, 11-10 = E, 9-0 = F; **10 point criterion:** 10 = A, 9 = B, 8-7 = C, 6 = D, 5 = E, 4-0 = F.

Please justify the score under the table, especially if you are assigning a low score according to any criterion. Specifically, please offer a detailed justification if the thesis scores less than 50 % of the maximum number of points in a given assessment-criteria group.

Finally, add up the points from all three assessment-criteria groups and convert the sum to your proposal for the overall evaluation of the thesis following the table in the section "Overall evaluation proposal". **It should be noted that if the thesis receives less than 50 % of the maximum number of points in any of the three assessment-criteria groups, the proposed overall evaluation must be F, regardless of the final score.**

Please note that the Czech evaluation system does not allow the option to "revise and resubmit". Instead, it applies a rating scale ranging from A to F, where A to E suggests that the thesis be accepted (with the corresponding grade from A-Excellent to E-Sufficient), while F suggests that the thesis is graded Fail and that the student is asked to revise and resubmit it if this is the first defence (the student can only defend the thesis twice).

1) Assignment fulfilment

First, evaluate the degree to which the thesis fulfilled the official project. **Deviations from the initial proposal should be judged according to how they are justified.** Thesis assignments can be found at this address: https://is.muni.cz/auth/rozpis/?lang=en or requested by email from the thesis supervisor.

Criterion	Evaluation	
	maxi-mum	*assigned*
Assignment fulfilment. Does the thesis focus precisely on the topic specified in the official assignment? To what degree is it based on the theoretical background specified in the assignment? Does it use the methods specified in the assignment? Does it achieve the objectives specified in the assignment and does it answer the research questions that the assignment specifies? Does it make use of literature specified in the assignment?	**40**	**38**

Justification of the evaluation:

In *Costly Signaling Theory of Pilgrimage: The case study of pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela*, Radim Chvaja draws from costly signaling theory in the behavioral, cognitive, and evolutionary theories of religion to investigate whether and to what degree pilgrimages are rituals involving honest displays of commitment. To that end, Chvaja contextualizes pilgrimages, as he understands it, within traditional studies or pilgrimage and evolutionary theory. Regarding the latter, his particular focus is costly signaling theory, from which he hypothesizes that pilgrimages, if they function as an opportunity for signaling commitment that is itself hard-to-fake, increase the likelihood of trusting pilgrims who undertake such activities in religious contexts, as opposed to secular activities. The latter would include hikers who undertake comparable journeys on trails but for non-religious ends. These predictions are contextualized in the case study of the now-a-days popular pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, in Spain. At this field site, Chvaja undertook two field surveys with 386 participants and three pre-registered field experiments with 1,407 participants. To evaluate data from these studies, he used linear regression models and mediation analyses. From his analyses, Chvaja infers that the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela involves costly signaling because the majority of pilgrim's identities associated with distance walked, religious motivations, and religious affiliations. Further, those who participate in the pilgrimage are more likely to be trusted if they partook in an extended pilgrimage, marked by distance travelled. Further still, religious adherents were more trustworthy than their secular counterparts, insofar as religious effort was associated with norm following. The results of the studies demonstrate that the outcomes were nevertheless mediated by norm following in both secular and religious contexts, as well as commitment to God in the religious context. Still, Chvaja is careful to point out that interpreting the mediation analyses is highly speculative in this case study given that it is difficult to parse the perceptions held by participants regarding another's perception of god, and apparent trustworthiness. Overall, the study is based on highly relevant literature and uses methods that are not only appropriate for testing predictions, which themselves follow from the theory of costly signaling, but also answers the questions raised by Chvaja in the introductory chapters.

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2) Formal requirements and language

Criterion	*Evaluation*	
	maxi-mum	*assigned*
Language. Academic writing and style.	**30**	**27**
Clarity and consistency of argument.	**30**	**28.5**
Structure, proportionality of the individual parts.	**10**	**10**
Bibliographic references. The accuracy, completeness and consistency of bibliographic data in the text and in the final bibliography.	**10**	**9.5**
Formal precision when dealing with sources of information. The accuracy of distinctions between the author's text and citations and paraphrases. The accuracy of quotations and paraphrases.	**10**	**9.5**
Typography and visuals. Typographical quality, quality of image attachments, charts, graphs, etc.	**10**	**9.5**
Overall score	**100**	**94**

Justification of the evaluation:

Overall, the paper is written extremely well. The language, albeit not the author's first language, was good. The arguments are clear and precise, and the structure is excellent, rendering a final product that is an appropriate length. I see no need for resubmitting for language improvement or communicating better.

3) Content

Criterion	*Evaluation*	
	maximum	*assigned*
Level of the thesis as an academic text. The clarity and accuracy of the expression of the research objectives. The clarity with which research questions are addressed and the level of unnecessary digression. The persuasiveness, originality and contribution of the results. The achievement of the objectives of the thesis.	**40**	**38**
Theoretical level. The clarity of the theoretical foundations offered. The degree to which they are directly and competently employed in solving the research problem. Definition of the used terminology.	**20**	**19.5**
Methodological level. Methodological clarity. The appropriateness of the methods used to resolve the research questions according to the relevant data. The degree of consistency with which methods are used. The quality of their usage. The depth of the analysis.	**20**	**20**
The quality of sources of information and the quality of their use. The relevance and adequacy of the resources used, and the use of the most significant resources (please specify below). The degree to which work with resources is critical, nuanced and accurate. The quality of their use in the solution of the research problem.	**20**	**19**
Overall score	**100**	**96.5**

Justification of the evaluation:

The main question of the thesis is addressed in the studies and analyses; the main question is also contextualized within appropriate and relevant literature; the title is proper; and the abstract as well as the introductory chapters provide accessible summaries and entries into the body of the text. What's more, the question is relevant and interesting. I believe the main topic of the thesis -- costly signaling in pilgrimages -- is fairly original and Chvaja conducted clear research that hasn't been done before.

Overall evaluation proposal

The overall evaluation of the thesis shall be determined according to the following table, based on the sum of scores of all three assessment-criteria groups. If the thesis receives less than 50 % of the maximum number of points in any of the three assessment-criteria groups, the proposed overall evaluation shall be F (Fail), regardless of the final

score. In this case, do not add up the scores. Instead complete the table "Sum of scores of sections 1-3" with "failed to satisfy". Although the evaluation follows from the sum of points, please type it explicitly in the appropriate box.

Sum of scores	Overall evaluation	In Words
240-229	A	Excellent
228-199	B	Very good
198-162	C	Good
161-132	D	Satisfactory
131-120	E	Sufficient/Acceptable (passed)
119-0	F	Fail

Sum of scores of sections 1-3:	228.5
Overall evaluation proposal:	**Excellent**

Free commentary

Reviewers' comments (overall impression of the thesis, strengths and weaknesses, suggestions for further development, etc.). In the case of **doctoral theses**, please state explicitly **(1) whether (or not) the thesis demonstrated the student's "research and creative capacities in the field", and (2) whether (or not) "you recommend the thesis for defence"**. These two statements are necessary for the reviews of doctoral theses to be valid.

I believe the thesis demonstrated the student's research and creative capacities in the field and I recommend the thesis for defense.

Suggestions for discussion

Please provide at least two areas for discussion regarding the thesis.

(1) Is religious costly signalling different from secular costly signalling – and if so, what demarcates the two, and to what extent can we expect the two to overlap or differ, whether that depends on the activity, context, identity of participants, place, or even time?

(2) The occurrence of pilgrimage is remarkably common, so much so that pilgrimages are a cross-cultural experience for many human communities. As such, and similarly to other cultural behaviour, it is unlikely that one theory or scholarly explanation can account for the prevalence of the occurrence. Hence, what other (alternative) explanations to pilgrimage explain the cross-cultural occurrence of pilgrimage? And along the same lines, which of those explanations are parallel or conducive to your approach – namely, CSR and an evolutionary account of religion – and which fall outside of current scientific studies but remain important for religious studies more broadly?

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Date, reviewer, signature

Place, date:	Birmingham, AL, USA
Name (including titles) and the department of the reviewer:	Dr. Jordan Kiper Assistant Professor of Anthropology Department of Anthropology University of Alabama at Birmingham
Signature:	