

MASTER'S EXAMINER REPORT

GPS – Geopolitical Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Thesis title:	Geopolitics of faith: Russian Orthodox Church in Western Balkans
Name of Student:	Darija Maraš
Referee (incl. titles):	Bohumil Doboš, Ph.D.
Report Due Date:	24.8.2022

Comments of the referee on the thesis highlights and shortcomings (following the four numbered aspects of your assessment indicated below).

1) Contribution and argument: The thesis covers a very important topic of the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Western Balkans – specifically in Serbia, Republika Srpska, Montenegro and North Macedonia as territories with significant Orthodox populations. The aim is well highlighted and developed through a systematic work with a large amount of data. The paper is aware of the limitations of measuring impacts of soft power (or influence) operations and takes these explicitly into account, making the argument compelling. The conclusion about different level of influence which is however rather limited even in the case of Serbia seems relevant and well grounded.

2) Theoretical and methodological framework: The paper is rooted in the concept of soft power. Unlike what is stated in the text, this is a concept not a theory, but it fits well for the purposes of the thesis. It is well understood and applied. The methodology is fitting the goal. Maybe a discussion over the “levels” of influence that are mentioned in the conclusion would further enhance the methodological quality.

3) Sources and literature: The thesis is based on a large amount of literature including deep analysis of primary documents. This is one of the main strengths of the presented thesis.

4) Manuscript form and structure: Apart from the literature review, which is little awkward, the form and structure is good.

5) Quality of presentation: There are no major issues, and the quality of English is very good.

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Contribution (research quality, analysis, and conclusions) (max. 40 points)</i>	38
<i>Theoretical and methodological framework (max. 25 points)</i>	22
<i>Sources and literature (max. 10 points)</i>	10
<i>Manuscript form and structure (max. 15 points)</i>	14
<i>Quality of presentation (grammar, style, coherence) (max. 10 points)</i>	10
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	94
The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)	A

Suggested questions for the defence are:

How would you evaluate the impact of ROC in the studied region following the February Russian invasion of Ukraine?

I recommend the thesis for final defence.

Referee Signature

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Quality standard
91 – 100	A	= outstanding (high honor)
81 – 90	B	= superior (honor)
71 – 80	C	= good
61 – 70	D	= satisfactory
51 – 60	E	= low pass at a margin of failure
0 – 50	F	= failing. The thesis is not recommended for defence.