

BACHELOR'S THESIS EXAMINER REPORT
PPE – Bachelor's in Politics, Philosophy and Economics
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Thesis title:	Trade relations between USA and China during Trump's presidency
Student's name:	SKURATOV, Alexandr
Referee's name:	Doc. Ing. Vladimír Benáček, CSc.

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	32	
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	10	
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	8	
<i>Total</i>		50	
Minor Criteria			
	Sources, literature	7	
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	4	
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	3	
<i>Total</i>		14	
TOTAL		64	

Plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score:

[NB:] If the plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score is above 15%, the reviewer has to include his/her assessment of the originality of the reviewed thesis in his/her review.

The reviewer does not suspect that plagiarism was involved in this thesis.

Reviewer's commentary according to the above criteria (min. 1800 characters including spaces when recommending a passing grade, min. 2500 characters including spaces when recommending a failing grade):

MAJOR ISSUES:

The topic itself is attractive: it deals with the interaction of politics of authorities with the market autonomy, though considered unilaterally - from the US side.

The thesis is not clear enough when dealing with the roots of the US headaches: The thesis is not very persuasive in explaining the substance of the US political interventions. I.e. in explaining the causes and objectives of political intervention. In addition, in the whole thesis, there is no mention of the impacts of US-CN trade on employment or on the technological or intellectual property theft by China.

I have also missed an economic analysis of trade impediments pointing to their rationality. Tariffs or embargoes whose costs are greater than gains are not a wise economic policy.

To the economic objectives of presidents: Why are you so sure that the economic policy objectives of all three presidents were mainly to decrease the trade deficit? The US could export to more profitable countries.

The thesis is written in a bold journalistic style embellished by rife references that unfortunately come too often from the grey literature.

Work with the data: It is a great pity that the rich trade (and investment) data was not shown on graphs of own construction and estimated for their dynamics. The technical side of the thesis is very low.

To conclusions: It is not clear that the hypothesis about the huge impact of presidential politics/policies on the economics of trade and its more effective performance, was not put in doubt. There was no clear evidence in the arguments.

Particular comments:

Ch. 1.2: Figures for the trade deficit should be supplemented at least by the evolution of trade levels.

Ch. 2.1 Literature review: It is a general methodological problem throughout this thesis - there is a bias in the selection of titles and topics. Except for two articles, there is no economic paper which would analyze the economic causes of the huge US deficit in visible trade flows with CN. There was omitted the trade in services and the trade in financial instruments. Political decisions cannot disregard these facts, which underpin each other and form a whole.

General statistics on the trade data: Though the thesis covers the period of 2008 - 2023 (Obama, Trump, Biden), the data are too often cut short, concealing thus the whole picture.

The weak side of the thesis rests in its descriptiveness of events, instead of concentrating on the causes and effects of policies, or declared versus really achieved policy objectives, respectively.

Page 32: Please explain your statement: "Interestingly, the Covid-19 situation around the world stimulated trade of 'pharmaceutical products' between the PRC and the US by nearly 600,000\$ USD between 2019-2020, which was the most significant growth in the 21st Century (ITC-Imports, n.d.)." How come that mere 600 thousand USD were so strategically important?

Proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F): D.

Suggested questions for the defence are:

Please explain the cases where the rationality between the economic and the political objectives (policies) is compensatory. I.e., could there be a trade-off between them? Give two examples and explain how the trade-offs can be measured.

Assess the consequences of the (short-sighted?) cancellation of the TPP buildup from the long-run US perspective.

I recommend the thesis for the final defence.

Vladimír Benáček

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.