

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

Title of the thesis:	Heidi Koelle
Author of the thesis:	Russian patronage to unrecognized states since the annexation of Crimea: A cross case study of the Republic of Abkhazia and the PMR
Referee (incl. titles):	Dr. Martin Riegl

Comments of the referee on the thesis highlights and shortcomings (following the 5 numbered aspects of your assessment indicated below).

1) Theoretical background:

The selected approach is relevant, focus on the role of the patron's state is well justifiable, however the theoretical and conceptual part will require major adjustments.

2) Contribution:

At the current state of play it's rather hard to evaluate a real contribution of the paper which needs to be finished first. The topic is interesting, ever relevant and topical as the role of the patron state is continuously changing vis a vis Russia's backed separatist regions.

3) Methods:

Methodological part of the paper, namely formulation of research questions needs to be reformulated in order to be a solid starting point of the research. Generally nothing critical can be said against the author's approach based on interviews which can provide an added value.

4) Literature:

The author has gathered a significant amount of relevant academic and empirical sources, the additional value is a body of information gathered in interviews. Still the quotation style requires major improvements.

5) Manuscript form:

The formal aspect is the weakest part of the paper, unfortunately it shows major flaws and can not be recommended for the thesis defense.

Box for the thesis supervisor only. Please characterize the progress in the working out of thesis (e.g. steady and gradual versus discontinuous and abrupt) and the level (intensity) of communication/cooperation with the author:

Suggested questions for the defence are:

I recommend the thesis for final defence. I recommend the following grade: F

SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED (for details, see below):

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Theoretical background (max. 20)</i>	10
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	10

<i>Methods</i>	<i>(max. 20)</i>	10
<i>Literature</i>	<i>(max. 20)</i>	10
<i>Manuscript form</i>	<i>(max. 20)</i>	2
TOTAL POINTS	<i>(max. 100)</i>	42
The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)		F

You can use the decimal point (e.g. giving the grade of 2.4 for 61 points).

DATE OF EVALUATION:

Referee Signature

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Czech grading	US grading
91 – 100	A	= excellent	= A
81 – 90	B	= good	= B
71 – 80	C	= satisfactory	= C
61 – 70	D	= satisfactory at a margin of failure	= D a marginal passing grade
51 – 60	E	= satisfactory at a margin of failure	= E a marginal passing grade
0 – 50	F	= failing is recommended	= non-defendable

The referee should give comments to the following requirements:

1) **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND:** Can you recognize that the thesis was guided by some **theoretical fundamentals** relevant for this thesis topic? Were some important theoretical concepts **omitted**? Was the theory used in the thesis consistently **incorporated with the topic** and hypotheses tested? Has the author demonstrated a genuine **understanding** of the theories addressed?

Strong	Average	Weak
20	12	< 8

 points

2) **CONTRIBUTION:** Evaluate if the author presents **original ideas** on the topic and aims at demonstrating **critical thinking** and ability to draw **conclusions** based on the knowledge of relevant theory and relevant empirical material. Is there a distinct **value added** of the thesis (relative to knowledge of a university-educated person interested in given topic)? Did the author explain **why** the observed phenomena occurred? Were the **policy implications** well founded?

Strong	Average	Weak
20	12	< 8

 points

3) **METHODS:** Are the **hypotheses** for this study clearly stated, allowing their further **verification and testing**? Are the theoretical explanations, empirical material and **analytical tools** used in the thesis relevant to the research question being investigated, and adequate to the aspiration level of the study? Is the thesis **topic comprehensively analyzed** and does the thesis not make trivial or **irrelevant detours** off the main body stated in the thesis proposal? More than 12 points signal an exceptional work, **which requires your explanation "why" it is so**).

Strong	Average	Weak
20	12	< 8

 points

4) **LITERATURE REVIEW:** The thesis demonstrates author's full understanding and **command of recent literature**. The author **quotes** relevant literature in a **proper way** and disposes with a **representative bibliography**. (Remarks: references to Wikipedia, websites and newspaper articles are a sign of **poor research**. If they dominate you cannot give more than 8 points. References to books published by prestigious publishers and articles in renowned journals give much better impression. Any sort of **plagiarism** disqualifies the thesis from admission to defence.)

Strong	Average	Weak
20	12	< 8

 points

5) **MANUSCRIPT FORM:** The thesis is **clear and well structured**. The author uses appropriate **language and style**, including the academic **format for quotations**, graphs and tables. The text effectively refers to graphs and tables, is easily readable and **stimulates thinking**. The text is free from typos and easy to comprehend.

Strong	Average	Weak
20	12	< 8

 points

Remarks for the referees:

- 1) Download the thesis from the SIS. If you have no access to SIS please ask the secretary of IPS (jana.krejcikova@fsv.cuni.cz, tel. 251 080 214) for sending you the thesis by e-mail.
- 2) Use the IEPS Thesis Report forms for filling your comments. **It is a standard at the FSV UK that the Referee's Report is at least 400 words.** In case you will assess the thesis as "non-defendable", please explain the concrete reasons for that in detail.
- 3) Retain your critical stance. You cannot confer more than 80 points upon a thesis that does not satisfy research standards in top European universities.
- 4) Upload the Report as PDF/A file into the SIS. Instructions how to convert .DOCx to PDF/A): „Save as“ – select „PDF“ – check in „Options or Možnosti“ that „PDF options“ tick „ISO 19005-1 compliant /kompatibilní s/ (PDF/A)“ – „Save“. If you have no access to SIS please send the unsigned PDF file to the secretary of IPS (jana.krejcikova@fsv.cuni.cz).
- 5) Please deliver to the IPS Secretariat, U Kříže 8, 15800 Praha 5 Jinonice, two hand-signed originals. Unfortunately, a photocopied report with signature does not suffice. Sorry.
- 6) Your Report will be remunerated, so we need also your account information (separate from this form).