

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

IEPS – International Economic and Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Title of the thesis:	Music and Politics: How Musicians and Their Music Become a Factor in Political Discourse
Author of the thesis:	Ma Liang Liang
Referee (incl. titles):	Doc. PhDr. Miloš Calda

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

1) Theoretical background: The author's list of sources has many worthy items but I found a systematic and explicit treatment of theoretical tools missing. At the UK's Faculty of Social Sciences, the students are expected to include a section discussing pros and cons of important sources. However, I was unable to find such a section in the submitted thesis.

2) Contribution: The author decided to cover a very broad topic, political aspects of music at various eras and of many music genres, stretching from Beethoven and Wagner to national anthems, folk songs, and rock music. This approach somehow dilutes the thesis' contribution. It would have been better for the thesis' quality and depth to focus on one or two case studies, eg Czech or German "national composers" or on various national anthems. The body of the thesis consists of three chapters (2, 3, and 4): 2. Politics, Music and Collective Action, 3. Analysis of examples of how musicians and their music became factors of political discourse in /the/ history, and 4. The Future of Music...

3) Methods: The author states this about her method: "Prediction of trends in quantitative and qualitative terms", as well as „Data analysis“ (p. 8).¹ The author of the present report is rather sceptical of such trends. On the other hand, the thesis, commendably, includes also „negative“ political use of music. She writes: „Negative music is a unique existence in the music which mostly represents destruction but not creativity. It is not only a kind of music that writes about obvious prejudice and hatred, guiding listeners to conduct irrational prejudice and hatred about specific races, political views, or deeds...“ (p. 32). This is far from naive beliefs which welcome any political involvement of singers and musicians. I find author's greatest contribution in her analyses of musical as well as textual aspects of national anthems (pp. 35-41). Also, the passage about tittytainment/entertainmentization of politics was valuable.

4) Literature: The choice of sources is excellent and comprehensive.

5) Manuscript form: Author's writing style is good at best. I wish he/she were able to develop her ideas much more clearly. There are language, especially grammat problems, too. Example: "One of the most obvious reason..." (p. 16)² Plural, not singular noun should have been used. "When the Germany separated..." (p. 40). Names of countries should be used without the definite article; moreover, Germany was not separated but divided.

Suggested questions for the defence are:

„What future relationship between politics and show-business do you expect?“

I recommend the thesis for final defence.

¹ Page numbers in this review refer to those in the pdf file of the thesis under review placed in SIS UK.

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Theoretical background (max. 20 points)</i>	12
<i>Contribution (max. 20 points)</i>	16
<i>Methods (max. 20 points)</i>	14
<i>Literature (max. 20 points)</i>	20
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20 points)</i>	15
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	77
The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)	C

DATE OF EVALUATION: September 13, 2018.

/Miloš Calda/

Referee Signature

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Quality standard
91 – 100	A	= outstanding (high honour)
81 – 90	B	= superior (honour)
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.

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 to 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	15	< 10	points

2) **CONTRIBUTION:** Evaluate if the author presents **original ideas** on the topic and aims at demonstrating **critical thinking** and the 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	15	< 10	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	15	< 10	points

4) **LITERATURE REVIEW:** The thesis demonstrates the author's full understanding and **command of recent literature**. The author **quotes** relevant literature in a **proper way** and works 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 a much better impression. Any sort of **plagiarism** disqualifies the thesis from admission to defence.)

Strong	Average	Weak	
20	15	< 10	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	15	< 10	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 form only for your comments. It is a standard at the FSV UK that the Referee's Report is at least 400 words. In case you 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 on 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).**