

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

Title of the thesis:	Chinese Foreign Aid, Trade and Investment in Central Asia: Implications on Sino-Russian Relations from a Geopolitical Perspective.
Author of the thesis:	Carter W. Oswood
Referee (incl. titles):	PhDr. Michael Romanov, Ph.D.

Remark: It is a standard at the FSV UK that the Referee's Report is at least 500 words long. In case you will assess the thesis as "non-defendable", please explain the concrete reasons for that in detail.

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Theoretical background (max. 20)</i>	18
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	18
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	18
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	20
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	20
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)	94
The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)	Excellent (A)

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

1) Theoretical background:

The author decided to analyze the size and scope of Chinese foreign aid, trade and government-sponsored investment activities in Central Asia from 2001 to 2014, through the theoretical framework of geoeconomics developed by Edward Luttwak and refined by Blackwill and Harris. The chosen theoretical framework suits the nature of the topic it is clearly presented and logically applied to the research itself.

2) Contribution:

The work is devoted to an interesting, current and important topic, which was also very difficult to process. At the same time, it is a topic that is not very frequent in the academic environment as far as I know. The author has been able to obtain and process a large amount of original data from publicly available sources, which has served as a solid foundation for drawing up sound conclusions.

3) Methods:

To answer the research questions, the author chose a combination of qualitative and quantitative approach. Given the nature of the topic and chosen theoretical framework, such a decision seems logical and justified.

4) Literature:

The author has collected, analyzed, and elaborated an extensive set of academic resources (books, articles, and master theses), and of course a vast array of analytical and statistical reports. I believe

that the quality and quantity of the resources used is more than sufficient for the elaboration of the master thesis.

5) Manuscript form:

The work is written in a readable and highly cultured language, with references to the resources used duly and carefully marked in the text. Numerous and carefully processed tables and charts are of great help in the quality and clarity of the text.

DATE OF EVALUATION: 06/12/2019

Referee Signature

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?

Strong Average Weak
20 10 0 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 10 0 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 10 points signal an exceptional work, **which requires your explanation "why" it is so**.

Strong Average Weak
20 10 0 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. (Remark: 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.

Strong Average Weak
20 10 0 points

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

Strong Average Weak
20 10 0 points

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Czech grading
91 – 100	A	= excellent
81 - 90	B	= good
71 – 80	C	= satisfactory
61 - 70	D	= satisfactory
51 - 60	E	
0	F	= fail (not recommended for defence)