

## REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

<b>Title of the thesis:</b>	<b>The significance of the “One Belt and One Road” Policy on China's Geopolitical and Economic Strategy</b>
<b>Author of the thesis:</b>	<b>Ma Xingdong</b>
<b>Referee (<i>incl. titles</i>):</b>	<b>Ing. Jan Bejtkovský, Ph.D.</b>

**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 is asking three main research questions: “First, how does the OBOR policy affect China's geopolitical and economic strategy? Second, what’s the significance of the OBOR policy to expand China’s influence in the countries along the OBOR?

Third, What difficulties will it encounter in this process? This thesis will concentrate on the three questions and provide a clear and complete structural framework for the analysis of the OBOR policy.”

While there is a lack of sources to a certain degree for the OBOR policy, there is plenty of literature regarding terms like „geopolitical strategy“, „economic strategy“ etc. For improving the thesis, I recommend at least considering some sort of OBOR definition (is it just an initiative, plan, is it policy or is it a doctrine etc.?) and more context for the OBOR as well – how does it compare to the Marshall Plan, is it similar to Japanese developmental strategies etc. Without defining these terms, it is difficult to “provide a clear and complete structural framework for the analysis of the OBOR policy”.

Apart from this, the thesis defines clearly the aims of OBOR as well as commonly mentioned arguments against it, so the background is broad enough to support the rest of thesis.

### **2) Contribution:**

I consider the choice of countries for analysis relevant to the current discussion about OBOR and the choice is well explained by the author. I think that comparison of different perceptions of the OBOR in different countries is needed and represents a clear contribution of the thesis towards the understanding of OBOR. Furthermore, the thesis gives a clear outline of the obstacles faced by OBOR on many levels and in many areas, which clearly contributes to the understanding of OBOR in the Czech Republic. However, I believe that the author could have gone a bit deeper in his analysis, maybe focusing more on the economic results, as economic cooperation is also part of the questions that the author is asking.

While I respect and support the selection of the countries for the analysis in the thesis, in many areas, Pakistan is the most significant case of OBOR based cooperation. This is why the author might have included it in his analysis, or at least should have given reasons why Pakistan was omitted.

### **3) Methods:**

The questions asked are more or less answered in the course of the thesis, which is definitely positive. There is plenty of analysis supporting the arguments of the author and the content of the thesis corresponds with the research questions. For academic work, I would recommend that the author adapts more critical and balanced stance in some questions – such as the Sino-Indian disputes etc.

#### 4) Literature:

The literature is abundant and used correctly in the course of the thesis.

#### 5) Manuscript form:

The thesis is clear and well- structured. It was easy and interesting to read.

All in all, the thesis is well written and should be recommended for final defence.

Grading: B-C

**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:

„1) What are the results and current obstacles in Sino-Pakistani cooperation under the OBOR framework? 2

2) How does the OBOR framework influence the relations between the Czech Republic and China?“

**I recommend the thesis for final defence. I recommend the following grade: “B-C.”.**

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Theoretical background (max. 20)</i>	13
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	14
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	13
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	18
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	19
<b>TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)</b>	<b>C</b>

**DATE OF EVALUATION: .02.09.2019**

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**Referee Signature**

#### Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Level of performance
91 – 100	<b>A</b>	= outstanding (high honour)
81 – 90	<b>B</b>	= superior (honour)
71 – 80	<b>C</b>	= good
61 – 70	<b>D</b>	= satisfactory
51 – 60	<b>E</b>	= low pass
50 – 0	<b>F</b>	= failure. Thesis is then not recommended for defence.