

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

Title of the thesis:	Evaluating China's Presence in South America
Author of the thesis:	Abril V. Mariaca
Referee (incl. titles):	Ing. Lourdes Gabriela Daza Aramayo, Ph.D.

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

1) Theoretical background:

I do not recognize that the thesis was guided by some theoretical foundations relevant to the thesis topic, except for the concept of soft power. Apart from the concept of “soft power”, there is no theory described in the thesis that was applied in the analysis.

Some important theoretical concepts were omitted, such as:

Even though the student mentions the author Prebisch (page 18, she only mentions her basis for import substitution industrialization), she does not capitalize on the author's presentation of different analytical perspectives on economic international relations policy and international relations theory and foreign policy, in conjunction with Carlos Escudé.

An analysis of Jiāng Shíxué's theories that refuted Prebisch's thesis on the deterioration of the terms of trade is missing. There is a quote from this author, but no analysis, nor is it included in further developing the analysis of the paper.

The theory used in the thesis is not consistently incorporated with the subject and the hypotheses tested, the hypotheses were not clearly defined.

2) Contribution:

The added value of the thesis is its empirical part offering a wealth of information; however, structuring the information provided in the thesis differently, e.g. summary tables of mutual trade volume between LA countries and external players would be hugely beneficial. Creating such tables would help provide a deeper, more analytical overview of the economy, as well as economic ties. The thesis is a compilation of available information rather than a deep analysis of trends.

A more critical approach towards the researched topic would be proper.

3) Methods:

The author explains the methods used in her thesis; however, these are too vague and too broad: “This research will be both investigative and descriptive.”

The method of research requires the researcher to have a clear vision about what they will be researching, how they will carry out research, what form of research they will choose (qualitative or quantitative research); there is already a concrete question in the process of methodology.

The student does not mention any scientific method of analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction or comparative methods. My recommendations were not taken into consideration.

4) Literature:

The thesis does not demonstrate 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, but the author really does not apply/use the theory in her analysis.

Some relevant authors are missing in the subject or specific contributions of authors who mention that they could contribute to a deeper and more critical analysis

5) Manuscript form:

The thesis is not well structured, unclear, and creates confusion. Although the structure of the thesis does not always allow the reader fluent reading, the reviewed thesis meets formal criteria required by Faculty of Social Sciences and the overall quality of written English is satisfying. The author uses the appropriate language and style, including the academic format for citations, graphs and tables.

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:

I met the student only once at the university to clarify the topic of her thesis and start building the structure of the work. In this singular meeting with the student, I had high expectations about the development of an excellent work. However, when the student began to work, she didn't have time for additional personal meetings and all communication was done via email. It was clear that the student no longer gave enough dedication to work and the first plans of a work of excellence were reduced. The student ignored at least half of my observations and when she sent the work again for review, I could see that many things were not fixed or changed and there seemed to be no desire to improve. There's something about this cyclical version of doing something over and over that seems particularly demotivating.

I think the problem was that the student did not respect the recommendations of the official tutor, but at the same time the student consulted her work with others who were not so demanding and did not follow up completely. The result of this is that the methodology is not well defined and deeper analysis is lacking.

Suggested questions for the defence are:

I recommend / I do NOT recommend/ the thesis for final defence.

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Theoretical background (max. 20 points)</i>	12
<i>Contribution (max. 20 points)</i>	12
<i>Methods (max. 20 points)</i>	8
<i>Literature (max. 20 points)</i>	15
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20 points)</i>	14
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	61
The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)	D

DATE OF EVALUATION: 27.1.2020

Daza
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).