

## REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

<b>Title of the thesis:</b>	Diplomacy and Diplomatic Institutions of Unrecognized De Facto States: Somaliland, Transnistria and Artsakh
<b>Author of the thesis:</b>	<b>Samuel Lavoie</b>
<b>Referee (incl. titles):</b>	<b>Mgr. Bohumil Doboš, Ph.D.</b>

**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):

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
<i>Theoretical background (max. 20)</i>	20
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	17
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	13
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	20
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	14
<b>TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)</b>	<b>B</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 work is grounded in a sufficient theoretical background on secession, international recognition and unrecognized states.

#### **2) Contribution:**

The thesis approaches the topic of recognition from interesting and understudied perspective. Its analysis of the different diplomatic strategies of the three selected cases provides a very detailed study. The conclusions are clearly based in the empirical data. The work, however, sometimes mixes together disconnected parts – e.g., beginning of Chapter 4.1. presents a comparison of Somaliland and Transnistria even if that does not fit the chapter. Additionally, there are some factual issues like the linking of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab which is not true at least for a decade, or the connection of the recognition from Russia to a wider level of recognition that is in cases of Abkhazia and South Ossetia empirically not the case.

#### **3) Methods:**

Comparative methodology is quite clearly used. Some parts are, nonetheless, somehow confusing (like unclear criteria in Table 1 "very low-very high"). The setting of dependent variables in the introduction is rather confusing and the research question might be more straightforward, but this does not affect the research itself.

#### **4) Literature:**

The literature is covering all important titles.

#### **5) Manuscript form:**

There are several formal issues. The bibliographic note and range of thesis are missing. The text is not structured according to the formal criteria that are presented in the template available to students at Faculty's website. Some citations are in the text while others are in the footnotes. On the other

hand, the language is very clear, and the structuring of the text as well as bibliography are done in a manner required by the final thesis.

**DATE OF EVALUATION: 26.5.2020**

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**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	<b>A</b>	= excellent
81 - 90	<b>B</b>	= good
71 – 80	<b>C</b>	= satisfactory
61 - 70	<b>D</b>	= satisfactory
51 - 60	<b>E</b>	
0	<b>F</b>	= fail (not recommended for defence)