

## 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>	Samuel Lavoie
<b>Referee (incl. titles):</b>	Martin Riegl

*Remark: It is a standard at the FSV UK that the Referee's Report is at least 400 words long. In case you will assess the thesis as "non-defendable", please explain the concrete reasons for that in detail.*

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

### **1) Theoretical background:**

Samuel provides a clear and solid conceptualization of key terms relevant in de facto states studies. He also clearly demonstrates his familiarity with seminal theoretical works of scholars such as E. Berg, or N. Caspersen among others, who studied the impact of legitimization strategies of de facto states on their international-legal status (level of recognition). Also normative theories of secession are discussed in the paper.

### **2) Contribution:**

A presented paper analyzes the impact of (lack of) diplomatic capability (institutions, staffing, foreign policy priorities) of selected de facto states (Somaliland, Transnistria) and Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) on their ability to achieve their desired international legal status. A tested hypothesis that a strong diplomatic institutions, qualified staff, and incisive strategies will enhance de facto state's chance to achieve international legitimacy has not been confirmed. It's not exactly a surprising outcome of the presented research, but it does not diminish author's merit in any way. Samuel has conducted a solid research of diplomatic practice of selected case studies and presents lot of interesting details about their diplomatic strategies, their partial success and failures. The paper's conclusion that it's not diplomatic factors that can explain their inability to obtain international recognition, reflects the very geopolitical logic behind particular decisions to grant/withhold recognition which is the main driving force of external actors.

### **3) Methods:**

Methodology is a strong part of the paper and contributes to its overall good impression. Samuel has defined the level of international recognition as the dependent variable, while the independent one is related to institutional setup, quality of diplomatic corps, and foreign policy priorities. Methodologically an analysis of primary documents, academic works, and interviews is the core of the paper.

### **4) Literature:**

Samuel has gathered number of sources, including theoretical literature, primary documents relevant for his case studies.

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

The thesis meets all formal criteria, the layout, grammar, and language (author is a native speaker) are above standard, also the paper is clearly structured. What I appreciate is a balance between theoretical and empirical chapters, both of them are well researched and written, more importantly the whole paper gives an impression of cohesive and comprehensive analysis of the selected problem.

In the case of successful defense, I recommend the following grade: "A" (excellent).

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

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
<i>Theoretical background (max. 20 points)</i>	18
<i>Contribution (max. 20 points)</i>	18
<i>Methods (max. 20 points)</i>	20
<i>Literature (max. 20 points)</i>	20
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20 points)</i>	20
<b>TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)</b>	<b>A</b>

**DATE OF EVALUATION:** June, 18 2020

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**Referee Signature**