

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

Title of the thesis:	Attitudes of border dwellers as indicators of the evolution of geopolitical reality in states – the case of the Czech Republic
Author of the thesis:	Gregory Luke Aldridge
Referee (incl. titles):	Mgr. Branislav Mičko

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>	20
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	20
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	18
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	20
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	20
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)	98
The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)	A (Excellent)

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 provides a very complex and well researched theoretical background, correctly summarizing the three prevalent approaches to the study of borders present in the academic literature. The derived hypotheses are well justified and provide interesting research focus.

2) Contribution:

The thesis provides a very well-made and comprehensive contribution to the area of border studies, especially from the perspective of impact of proximity to border on political attitudes, which, as the author correctly commented on, has been generally overlooked by the academia, yet provides important inputs to the subject under study.

3) Methods:

It is obvious that the author possesses a deep insight into the quantitative methodology. The data are processed correctly with appropriate methods and all associated descriptions are provided. Unless I somehow missed it, it is a bit surprising to see that the author has not explicitly spelt out the type of regression he used nor did he mention (outside of autocorrelation), whether he conducted the required tests (most importantly the normality of distribution and heteroskedasticity for the dependent variables). Arguably, based on the obvious expertise the author shows in using these methods, it can be assumed it was simply taken for granted, nonetheless, for the reproduction purposes it is always better to show in detail what type of regression was used and whether the data are fitting the regression's assumptions.

4) Literature:

The author outlined the current state of the art in the field of border studies, mentioning all key researchers and relevant personalities.

5) Manuscript form:

No problem.

DATE OF EVALUATION: 7 JUN 2020

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)