

MASTER'S THESIS EXAMINER REPORT

IEPS – International Economic and Political Studies

Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Thesis title:	Self-interested individuals and social order in liberal thought
Student's name:	Naoki Kawada
Referee's name:	Jan Hornát

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	50	43
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	15	13
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	15	13
Total		80	69
Minor Criteria			
	Sources, literature	10	7
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	5	3
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	5	4
Total		20	14
TOTAL		100	83

Plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score:

[NB:] If the plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score is above 15%, the reviewer has to include his/her assessment of the originality of the reviewed thesis in his/her review.

The match score is significantly below 15%.

Reviewer's commentary according to the above criteria

Mr. Kawada's thesis is an ambitious attempt to grasp the fundamentals of liberalism and to understand the type of order it induces within societies. The student explores the question of how a philosophy that supports individuation in a society actually fosters a sense of common good and provides some form of order for the atomized individuals. The thesis reads as a philosophical essay and confirms the student's ability to think and write about complex and abstract concepts.

The paper has language issues and a read-through and editing by a native English language speaker would have elevated the thesis to a higher level. The organization of the paper is logical. However, I would welcome a stronger justification of why Mr. Kawada chose the particular authors (Hobbes, Hume, Locke, Mill, Rawls and Mises) on which he based his argumentation – I do not dispute the choice, but other authors, such as Dahl,

Berlin, Nozick or Constant could have also formed the backbone of the thesis. Also, I believe the author could have done a better job in explaining to the reader why the question he is posing in the thesis is interesting and worth the deep scientific exploration. In other words, what was the author's motivation to elaborate such a thesis – is it because there is a seeming “crisis of liberalism”, is it because the concept of “Asian values” poses a challenge to the West's liberal project?

The paper is grounded in relevant literature, but a larger diversity of secondary sources would be welcome. As Mr. Kawada's supervisor, I can attest, however, that he read, consulted and studied each source diligently and the result is a well-structured and thought-through thesis. As to the formal aspects of the thesis, the citation norm is consistent and the paper contains all the formal necessities of a BA thesis.

Proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F): B

Suggested questions for the defence are:

1. Many Western political scientists and philosophers claim that “liberalism failed” and therefore has no future – why do they say so? Do you agree?
2. Is liberalism as a society's ordering principle compatible with the concept of “Asian values” – i.e. are “Asian values” (as formulated by Lee Kuan Yew) a real set of values or just a political construct to facilitate opposition to Western-backed liberalism?

I recommend the thesis for final defence.

Referee Signature

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Quality standard
91 – 100	A	= outstanding (high honor)
81 – 90	B	= superior (honor)
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.