

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

Title of the thesis:	Religion and Foreign Policy: The Case of Saudi Arabia
Author of the thesis:	Mr. Sabir Mammadov
Referee (incl. titles):	PhDr. Lucie Hindlsová, M.A., Ph.D.

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>	15
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	10
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	8
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	13
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	16
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)	62
The proposed grade (1-2-3-4)	2

You can even use a decimal point (e.g. giving the grade of 2.5 for 60 points).

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

1) Theoretical background: The theoretical framework is the strength of the thesis. The different sides in which the topic can be understood are well covered. Nevertheless, it would be preferable, if the theoretical chapter was better linked with the remaining ones.

2) Contribution: The author chose for his thesis a very topical but also a complicated subject. It focuses on one aspect of the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia, namely on the role of religion. It presents an interesting overview of links between politics, religion and ideology of this Middle Eastern country applying historical timeline as well as case studies.

One comment to the content: the author presents in a couple of places his opinions as facts, which, unfortunately, reduces the value of his work. Some statements are not substantiated by evidence or supported by adequate academic resources (this comment relates mostly to the chapter 3.2 – *Controversy and the mismanagement of financial assistance ...*). The introduction and the conclusion of the thesis should be more elaborated.

3) Methods: the author combines qualitative methods and interpretative approach. The very subject is treated fairly in detail and in structured chapters, but the thesis as a whole has two shortcomings. There is not a strong linkage between the introduction of the thesis (that would deserve more attention) and the conclusions. The presented form of the introduction is rather a general overview of the topic than analytical introduction to the issue and a definition of clear thesis objectives. As a result, the concluding chapter cannot reflect questions and hypotheses presented in the introduction. The second point is related. There is a lack of clear hypotheses in the introduction. For some reason, the author, who outlines the hypotheses clearly in the thesis proposal, does not include them in the same extent in the thesis itself.

4) Literature: The thesis is based on a combination of various resources: books, academic articles, websites and documentaries. There is a sufficient base of print academic resources complemented by online resources that constitute the majority of all resources. The author does not limit himself to using only English resources, but also Czech or Russian ones. However, the chapter on literature overview could be more analytical and provide outline and references to the current academic

trends related to the topic of the thesis and to the sources often quoted by the author throughout the text.

5) Manuscript form: From the manuscript point of view and in general terms, the text of the thesis is clear. Content-alone chapters of this work have a well-arranged structure. The thesis is written in a clear and readable style and language. It contains a minimum number of typos or language errors. It uses a unified format of quotations (though there could be a unification of the system of the quotations that now combines both footnotes and parentheses following sentences). The thesis includes in its appendices various illustrative graphs and tables. One minor drawback is the absence of Czech abstract.

DATE OF EVALUATION:

22/1/2013



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	US grading
81 – 100	1	= excellent	= A
61 – 80	2	= good	= B
51 – 60	3	= satisfactory	= C
41 – 50	3	= satisfactory	= D
0 – 40	4	= fail	= not recommended for defence