

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

Title of the thesis:	Democratic Transition in Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic and their Successor States with Particular Focus on the Geopolitical Framework since 1989
Author of the thesis:	Eric Holtschke
Referee (incl. titles):	Mgr. Martin Riegl, PhD.

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>	14
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	15
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	18
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	20
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)	82
The proposed grade (1-2-3-4)	1-2

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:

In the first and second chapter the author conceptualizes concepts of regionalism (including the role of hegemony in regionalism related theories), region and democratization (along with the consolidation). E.Holtschke places his research within the framework of domestic-level theories (which is selected out of three clusters of regionalist theories) – particularly regionalism and state coherence, regime type and democratization and convergence theories. The author also utilizes works of Hettne, Haas, Fawcett, Mitraný which one can hardly object. Once a while, the thesis lacks a profound in-depth analysis, however considering the fact the thesis in the field of geopolitics is being reviewed I do not find it a major flaw.

2) Contribution:

The authors has decided to analyze and compare the process of democratic transitions and consolidation in GDR and Czechoslovakia and their successor states, which is undoubtedly important and interesting topic, however not really thoroughly researched. The author has decided to answer three main questions: *"How can the development of the transitional process of Czechoslovakia and German Democratic Republic and their successor states be outlined?, What are the similarities between these mentioned states, what are the differences regarding to the level of transition and where do these countries stand today?, How can the geopolitical impacts of the transition be analyzed and evaluated (regarding to the membership of these mentioned states in international organisations)?* Especially the focus of the thesis on geopolitical aspect of regional integration of the former GDR, the Czech Republic and Slovakia seems to be really topical these days. Mr. Holtschke also provides the analysis of the importance of all above mentioned states within the North-Atlantic and European structures and compares the present situation with coercive regionalism in the era of the Warsaw Pact and COMECON. He also tackles the fact that while Central Europeans tend to perceive the NATO as the regional "UN" securing their immature

democracies, the former hegemon (Russia) in the region is increasingly restless with the NATO troops at its doorstep.

3) Methods:

The author utilizes the method of comparative case studies and historical analysis.

4) Literature:

E.Holtschke has managed to compile extensive amount of resources (monographs, internet resources and other documents in English, Czech and German).

The author has analyzed works of all relevant authors dealing with the researched topic. He explicitly mentions theorists like T. Parson, S. M. Lipset, S. Huntigton (1969). A. Przeworski, G. Di Palmas, Samuel Huntigton, J. Linz or A. and their main works related to the process of consolidation within the transition process. Mr. Holtschke also includes authors like V. Hloušek or L. Kopeček.

Overall the thesis proved the author's ability to critically analyze the whole bunch of sources, however some parts of the thesis (related to consolidation of democracies in particular countries) might go in deeper details and seems to be a bit flat.

5) Manuscript form:

The submitted thesis meets all standards required by Faculty of Social Sciences. Therefore I do recommend it mark the thesis as excellent or very good.

DATE OF EVALUATION: May 26th, 2014

Referee Signature