

## REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

<b>Title of the thesis:</b>	<b>The Rise of Nationalism in Times of Crisis. The Case of Yugoslavia.</b>
<b>Author of the thesis:</b>	<b>Marija Brnović</b>
<b>Referee (incl. titles):</b>	<b>František Šístek, M. A., Ph. D.</b>

**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):

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
<i>Theoretical background (max. 20)</i>	7
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	6
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	6
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	6
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	7
<b>TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>The proposed grade (1-2-3-4)</b>	<b>1</b>

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:**

When approaching a subject as vast and complex as the dissolution of Yugoslavia and its causes, one can choose from a great number of theories of nationalism and approach the subject from a number different angles (the role of economy, nationalism, political and intellectual elites, religion, geopolitical circumstances, unresolved questions of history and identity etc.). The thesis is based on a selection of respectable theories of economic development and nationalism which are meaningfully combined in order to suit the chosen case study. However, the discussion of existing sources, theories and approaches in the introductory part of the thesis could have been more extensive.

17 points

#### **2) Contribution:**

The work is not based on the results of new primary research and does not offer a radically new perspective. Nevertheless, it is a solid assessment of the chosen topic based on a good selection of available secondary literature which belongs to the respectable academic mainstream. The same goes for its theoretical and methodological contribution. In fact, one cannot reasonably expect highly original ideas in a field which has been a subject of intensive research and scholarly debates in the recent 25 years or so. The merit of the work, therefore, lies primarily in the ability of the author to select from abundant sources and approaches and then construct a concise, clearly structured and convincing explanation of Yugoslavia's break-up due to primarily economic causes. Moreover, such analysis of Yugoslavia's economic and political crisis, the rise of nationalist particularism and the country's dissolution does not have a purely academic value. As Brnović herself rightly mentions, her researches evolves around topics which are highly relevant in view of similar problems currently faced by the European Union (the north/south divide, rise of economic and populist nationalism, complex political structure, complicated decision making etc.).

16 points

### 3) **Methods:**

The hypothesis is clearly stated and analyzed in the introductory section. The author provides different examples in favor of the hypothesis throughout the work and a final assessment in the conclusion. Despite the fact that scholarly literature on the subject is already immense (especially on the subject of nationalism), Brnović has managed to stick to her major topic and line of argumentation without detours towards other aspects. However, it is regrettable that she did not devote more attention to particular developments in the individual republics. This would allow her to compose a more complex picture of the topic and illustrate her main points by additional material. After the 1974 constitution, Yugoslavia was highly decentralized and much of the political and economic decision making took place on republican level. Such approach could have enriched her work with new comparative material and strengthen her arguments. Some scholarly works which focus on individual republics also highlight the importance of socialist bankruptcy and rise of unemployment as primary causes of the rise of nationalism (for example the relatively little known but excellent case study of Montenegro: “Ekonomija rasipništva (odlike crnogorske ekonomije 1945-1989)“, in: Dragutin Papović: *Rani ratovi*, Cetinje 2010).

16 points

### 4) **Literature:**

The author has used relevant, up-to-date scholarly literature. She has consulted a representative selection of secondary works whose authors have significantly contributed to recent scholarly debates about the economic causes of Yugoslavia's break-up in English and Serbo-Croatian. The sources are generally properly cited and meaningfully discussed in the text. Apart from the sources used by Brnović, I would also recommend Dennison Rusinow's classical overview of Yugoslav political and economic development, culminating by the adoption of the 1974 federal constitution (*The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, Berkley and Los Angeles 1977). As for the break-up of Yugoslavia, one striking omission is Sabrina Ramet's *Thinking about Yugoslavia*, 2005 which summarizes the debates about the country's break-up and the ensuing wars of Yugoslav succession. Her survey can also be recommended as a good starting point when it comes to bibliographical references. In the bibliography, M. Brnović has sometimes used diacritical marks while citing sources in the South Slavic languages but omitted them in other cases. Reference to Kohn (1994), pg. 32, is not listed in the bibliography. The already mentioned Sabrina Ramet is not spelled Remet, as in the bibliographical entries nr. 51 + 53 and the letter “R.” cannot stand for her first name either, as in the bibliographical entry nr. 52. However, the above mentioned objections cannot overshadow the overall positive impression.

16 points

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

The thesis is clear, well-structured, readable, written in a standard academic language, sources are properly cited. Quite rarely, one encounters arguments which could be better developed as well as sentences which could be linguistically upgraded (pg. 47: “The only thing for which it should be

waiting for was a motive to start with military conflict. It was found in Declarations of independence proclaimed by Slovenian and Croatian parliaments in June 1991. One day after JNA attacked Slovenia. It was the begin of bloody circumstances in the former Yugoslavia.”). Occasionally, there are other minor mistakes (pg. 52: Milka Planinic instead of Planinc; pg. 57: “Serbian Academy of Intellectuals” instead of Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts etc.).

17 points

**DATE OF EVALUATION:** *January 27, 2016*

***František Šístek, M. A., Ph. D.***

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***Referee Signature***