

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

Title of the thesis:	Preventing the optimal Outcome – Free-Riding at Charles University
Author of the thesis:	Jonas Kibitzki
Referee (incl. titles):	PhDr. Václav Korbek

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>	18
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	15
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	20
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	18
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	10
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)	81
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:

The thesis is well underpinned by the theory. It tries to merge economics and social psychology theories (free-riding, social loafing) which was a bit confusing at the beginning since both theories are just slightly different but trying to compare theories from two fields is definitely beneficial and should be more common. Maybe, literature review on "sucker effect" could be a bit shorter when it is not included in hypotheses. Hypotheses are developed based on theory and previous findings and clearly stated in testable form.

2) Contribution:

The contribution of the thesis is twofold. It is only a second study looking empirically on free-riding and social-loafing of university students. It extends the original study of Jassawalla et al. (2008) on several dimensions. The thesis looks at development during the study progress and explores more into depth motivations of students. Second, it bridges theories from economics and social psychology showing both have similar predictions and lead to similar results. Jonas cannot unfortunately disentangle completely motivational factors in his thesis, which slightly decreases the overall contribution. However, it is only a small downside.

3) Methods:

This is the strongest part of the thesis. Jonas himself conducted a field research gathering more than 200 questionnaires from students at the IES. A lot of attention was paid to design of the survey and the author considered all potential problems (sample selection, timing, range of answers or phrasing of questions to avoid framing and demand effect). Moreover, ethical standards for conducting a field research are followed. Jonas is also very transparent about the problem with some questionnaires, where students intentionally changed their answers in order to shorten up the time for answering. However, he showed that results are robust even for leaving out those surveys. Complete surveys are included in Appendix increasing already high transparency of the design. This is very important since differences across studies can be driven by very subtle changes in the design.

The results are described and interpreted carefully. The author speaks about possible mechanisms and explanations of certain phenomena but is not too speculative when he cannot back his conclusions with evidence. Results are in line with his hypotheses showing that majority of students have experienced free-riding and unlike students in the US are willing to actively confront free-riders. On the other hand, they would appreciate institutional mechanisms how do deal with free-riders (such as choose the group members).

4) Literature:

The author uses relevant sources and the literature review is with no doubt sufficient.

5) Manuscript form:

The text could have been more polished. Some sentences are unclear, there are also a few typos in the text. Jonas worked hard during the process of writing to shorten up and simplify the text, leaving out redundant parts, yet the thesis would still benefit when written more efficiently. Especially part Discussion from a huge part overlaps with Results.

To sum it up, the thesis is of a good quality and I recommend the thesis for defense. Moreover, if the student proves the quality at the defense, I suggest **grade A, výborně**.

DATE OF EVALUATION: 24.8.2016



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