



FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA
UNIVERZITY KARLOVY
V PRAZE



Ústav světových dějin

Master's Thesis Review

Student's name and surname: *Oleksandra Zakharova*

Title of the thesis: *The development of National Institutes for Culture: The Case Study of the French (Institut Français) and Russian (Russian Centre of Science and Culture) Cultural Centres*

Reviewer's name and surname: *Jiří Janáč*

1. Heuristic (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

1.1 Evaluation of the selection of literature and sources	2
1.2 Complexity of used sources from the perspective of the state of the art	1

Short evaluation:

The selection of the literature fully corresponds with the chosen topic and provides a good basis for theoretical and methodological construction of the thesis. More robust inquiry into the political science debate on cultural imperialism would do no harm.

2. Research problem and its solution (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

2.1 Choice of the formulation of the research issue respects the task given to the student	1
2.2 The relevance of the goal from the perspective of research area methodology	2

Short evaluation:

The general design of the thesis does not fully correspond with aims declared in the introduction. If the author sets up to study “how countries construct their national image



Ústav světových dějin

abroad” (approx. p.11 – page numbering would also help) under the umbrella of their „soft power“ policies, one would expect a detailed analysis of these national policies. However, if the goal is to find out “how have strategies for the development of national cultural centres adapted to local contexts abroad?” (see concl.), then the chosen methodology and sources fit the purpose well.

3. Thesis' structure evaluation (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

3.1 Is the structure of the thesis logical?	1
3.2 Does the thesis' structure work along the methodology and methods declared in the introduction	1

Short evaluation:

The text is structured logically and corresponds with the chosen methodology.

4. Quality of analysis and interpretation (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

4.1 Analysis of sources and literature	1
4.2 Interpretation of sources and literature in their interaction	1

Short evaluation:

The author of the thesis shows clearly her ability to think critically and to interpret sources within the given methodological framework.

5. Quality of the text (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)



Ústav světových dějin

5.1 Style and grammar	2
5.2 Use of terminology	2

Short evaluation:

The quality of the language could be certainly improved, but also in the current state the thesis meets academic standards. Also, I do have some minor reservations regarding the terminology (which sometimes appear as if invented by the author – consider for instance the use of the notion of „cultural institutions abroad“ or „national culture abroad“ – both of which seem far too broad.

6. Synthetic evaluation (500 signs):

The thesis successfully combines at least three methodologically and theoretically diverse bodies of literature (marketing, political science and cultural studies) and simply by doing that, it stands out as uniquely ambitious and innovative research project on MA level. Furthermore, Alexandra managed to do this in a comparative perspective, what required working with two different cultures and more importantly in two languages (with the thesis being written in the third one). In spite of some minor issues (see comments below and above), this is a very fine thesis.

7. Questions and comments which should the candidate answer and discuss during the defense:



Ústav světových dějin

1. Above mentioned issue concerning the use of the concept of „national cultures abroad“ – not clear what it actually contains, seems to be much more than simply cultural centres and (more importantly) alludes more to migrant cultures rather than state agencies.
2. My second question concerns the issue raised above under the no.2 section – the author methodologically privileges the perspective of the centres and their managers over the national cultural policies, and builds upon the hypothesis that the „development of cultural centres abroad depend on the cultural policy of the recipient country, rather than the domestic one.“ (see intro.). This construction of the argument seems to be a bit far-reaching, self-affirmative and unsubstantiated (given the actual content of the thesis)

Suggested grade: excellent (A)

Date: Prague, 1.6.2017

Signature: Jiří Janáč