

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

IEPS – International Economic and Political Studies, Charles University

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Title of the thesis: | Role of Brazil in Latin American Integration Processes |
| Author of the thesis: | Jelena Kazakova |
| 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> | 20 |
| <i>Contribution (max. 20)</i> | 18 |
| <i>Methods (max. 20)</i> | 20 |
| <i>Literature (max. 20)</i> | 17 |
| <i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i> | 18 |
| TOTAL POINTS (max. 100) | 93 |
| The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F) | A |

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

1) Theoretical background:

The stated aim of the paper is to explain Brazil's role and strategy in pursuing and shaping regional cooperation within Latin America. To do so the author presents three hypotheses looking into Brazil's motivation, end goals, or constraints to promote and pursue regional cooperation within Latin America. Besides that Jelena has defined research questions dealing with Brazil's interests, domestic and foreign incentives driving Brazil's regional policy and end-goal of Brazil's regional strategy. The last question the author raises is whether the strategy has been so far a success story or not.

The whole paper is framed within realist tradition of IR with a particular focus the concept of consensual hegemony which presents a proper approach to analyze the character, motivation and driving forces behind the regional integration. Besides that, the author has decided to conceptualize the notions of globalization, regionalism, regionalization and regional power which helps Jelena to link the theoretical part with the empirical analysis of selected case studies.

This paper argues that realism is more suitable to address the problem formulation of this theses, than liberalism or constructivism, due to its focus on national self-interest, security, states' integrity and international power. Maybe the discussion of well known basic paradigms of IR is a bit superfluous.

2) Contribution:

The paper provides really a solid and comprehensive analysis of the role of Brazil in selected regional projects.

3) Methods:

The author has chosen a relevant methodology using both qualitative and quantitative methods, using in order to verify declared hypotheses, answer research questions. The author applies selected methods throughout the thesis which helps her to achieve declared goals.

4) Literature:

The author has gathered enough relevant resources and shown her ability to conduct an independent research. What I miss a bit is the work of Hurrell/L.Fawcett (Regionalism in World Politics) which also explains regional integration from diverse theoretical perspectives and levels of analysis.

5) Manuscript form:

The paper meets all formal criteria (length, structure, value added). Additional proofreading would be beneficial as minor typos appear in the paper.

DATE OF EVALUATION: 22.1.207

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 |
|--------------|----------|--------------------------------------|
| 91 – 100 | A | = excellent |
| 81 - 90 | B | = good |
| 71 – 80 | C | = satisfactory |
| 61 - 70 | D | = satisfactory |
| 51 - 60 | E | |
| 0 | F | = fail (not recommended for defence) |