

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

Title of the thesis:	Small Island Developing States and Statehood
Author of the thesis:	Dustin Breitling
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>	19
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	19
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	18
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	19
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	15
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)	90
The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)	A

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 deals with the important and topical question of the interrelationship of possible extinction of states (namely Tuvalu, Maldives, or Kiribati) and the climate changes (rising sea level). The author has touched the question whether the destiny/international status of the small island states can be endangered by the climate change and even set a precedent (challenge) to the existing recognition regime or transfer the notion of sovereign. In order to answer the above mentioned researched question which is closely connected to the effectiveness and legality of the sovereign statehood, Mr. Breitling offers the conceptualization of sovereignty, theories of state recognition, defining features of statehood, climate change, small islands state, deterritorialized entity, government in exile among others.

2) Contribution:

The thesis submitted by D. Breitling, devoted to the topic of small developing islands and statehood, raises the important question of state sovereignty's nature (and its possible transformation) which has been debated since the end of 1990s which the author interestingly links to the importance of climate changes. Thus Mr. Breitling has analyzed possible impact of the rising sea level (which is already on the agenda of the most affected island states in the Pacific Ocean or in the Indian Ocean). Particularly he examines the possible modes/statuses which might reflect to the situation, when the fully recognized states loses one of key attributes of sovereign statehood as defined by the Montevideo Convention – its defined territory. Would it be decertification as proposed by J. Herbst in case of notoriously collapsing states, delegation of state functions on the closest neighbor, or creation of governments in exile? These are all important questions that deserve a serious research not only in the field of political geography but also in the international law.

3) Methods:

Although methodology has been clearly defined in the thesis project, unfortunately it does not appear in the paper itself. However, this does not mean there are no methods used throughout the thesis. Mr. Breitling has based his research mostly on qualitative data and heavy and extensive analysis of mostly secondary sources.

4) Literature:

All the sources (in the field of political science, international law) including monographs, journals, electronic sources, documents are relevant and the amount of data gathered is far more than sufficient. The author has shown his ability to conduct independent research and critically analyze academic sources as well as data.

5) Manuscript form:

The thesis meets all formal criteria for Master thesis required by the Faculty of Social Science, including the scope of the thesis, linguistic standards, structure of the thesis. Nevertheless the methodology, research questions, hypotheses, definition of the topic should be also present in the introduction or in the theoretical part and not only in the project which itself is not an integral part of the thesis body.

Still I do recommend to grade it as excellent.

DATE OF EVALUATION: 8 January 2018

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