

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

Title of the thesis:	The Road to Sorrow: From State Crime to State Apology
Author of the thesis:	Miguel Molina
Referee (incl. titles):	RNDr. Jan Kofroň, Ph.D.

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>	19
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	15
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	20
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	18
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)	90
The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)	A/B

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

1) Theoretical background: Solid, especially considering that the topic has not been in the center of attention (if compared to topics like: international organizations, international trade or security etc.). Considering how undertheorized the subject is, it is – especially at the MA level – fully acceptable that the thesis does not operate with a well-defined theory or theories and instead it tests several (simplistic) hypotheses. These hypotheses are however grounded in existing literature and prototheories – therefore it is not possible to blame the author for lack of theoretical insight. What is more important, the author eventually tries to discuss conditions under which apologies are more (or less likely) – thus contributing to theoretical development.

2) Contribution: Excellent. "Geopolitics of sorrow" or more precisely state apologies is underresearched topic, yet it is highly relevant at symbolic and (I dare to say) even at practical level of international relations. Therefore, any attempt to explain under which conditions apologies are issued (considering how rare and often delayed they often are) must be welcomed. In this sense the MA thesis is outstanding.

Similarly, empirical evidence regarding the two Latin-American cases is interesting and original - especially for Europeans.

A bit more problematic is the conclusion. While a reader will probably agree with the author about the main forces affecting the outcome of a (non)apology in given cases, s/he might be in doubt about generalizability of the conclusions beyond the three cases. It is fair to highlight however that similar issues are common when we research novel phenomenon, we lack well-framed theories and we bet on rather inductive research.

3) Methods: While case comparative case study is a good choice here, it brings several limitations. The first one is limited generalizability of its results, especially when a research is rather inductive. In situations like this case selection is always doubtful and can affect results significantly. Thus, one would expect that case selection and its possible implications for theoretical leverage of the study could have been a bit more discussed in the thesis. Similarly, the author could have highlighted that

his study is theoretical and not historical – and as such it can compare cases from very different historical contexts.

A possible solution to the generalizability issue is to increase number of cases (toward 6-8). Nevertheless, there are length limits imposed upon MA theses effectively reducing number of investigated cases to 3-5 in maximum.

It is important to highlight that the author tried to include cases with different value on his dependent variable thus reducing problem with selection bias.

The biggest problem - methodologically speaking - is that geopolitical power of the USA makes external pressures rather ineffective. One can ask if countries which are neither superpowers nor regional powers (like Turkey) are more affected by external pressures? This is something which cannot be however resolved based on this thesis. Considering this the thesis tells a lot about behavior of powerful perpetrators, it might not – however – provide solid framework for thinking about behavior of less powerful perpetrators...

4) Literature: Numerous and relevant.

5) Manuscript form: Generally, very good. Here and there some minor mistakes.

DATE OF EVALUATION: January 2nd 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
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)