

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

Title of the thesis:	The Belt Tightens: China's Learning Curve on Employing Soft Power in Sri Lanka
Author of the thesis:	Will Tizard
Referee (incl. titles):	Michael Romancov, 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>	10
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	10
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	12
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	12
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	20
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)	62
The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)	Satisfactory D

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

1) Theoretical background:

I can not avoid the impression that, from the point of view of the field studied by the author, it would make more sense to analyze the relationship between China and Sri Lanka through other theories, or to focus on other phenomena, especially those related to hard power. However, the topic has been formulated in this way and the theories used are acceptable and adequate, although relevant theories should be discussed in more detailed way.

2) Contribution:

I appreciate the fact that the author outlined the historical context that convincingly demonstrates that China is returning to a space with which it has a historical experience. On the other hand, however, it seems that the historical excursion is oversized due to the overall scope of work. The text is a solid description of a number of relevant factors that influence the relationship between China and Sri Lanka, but the link with the declared theories is rather shallow. The research questions that the author has decided to address are relevant, but I do not feel that the text itself has been structured to answer them.

3) Methods:

The author declares that he carries out his work as a single-case study, which he basically fulfilled. The method of direct observation, based on direct questioning, was partially met, since interviews with the supervisor and one on-site interview cannot be considered as a sufficiently representative sample.

4) Literature:

The work could and should be based on a much wider range of professional literature and other information sources. The newspaper articles are clearly dominated, which is not adequate for texts of this type.

5) Manuscript form:

The author's language is cultivated, accurate and comprehensible, but this is not a great surprise for a native speaker. The sources used are properly quoted.

DATE OF EVALUATION: June, 15th 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)