

## REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

<b>Title of the thesis:</b>	Intelligence communities v. Counterterrorism: which factors are the most influential?
<b>Author of the thesis:</b>	<b>Claire Bouchard</b>
<b>Referee (incl. titles):</b>	<b>Mgr. Bohumil Doboš</b>

**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):

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
<i>Theoretical background (max. 20)</i>	20
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	2
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	2
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	20
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	15
<b>TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)</b>	<b>E</b>

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

#### **1) Theoretical background:**

Despite the fact that the theoretical chapter of the work is mostly comprising of conceptual development, there is some clear background to the work. The work is based in a rational choice theory framework, stating that the actors attempt to set up an institutional design to confront terrorist threat as successfully as possible. While the selection of rational choice theory framework towards the highly irrational struggle against terrorist threat can be seen as slightly problematic, it establishes a clear guidance for the consequent analysis.

#### **2) Contribution:**

The work aims to develop an institutional approach towards the study of effectiveness of the intelligence services in the counter-terrorist operations. The possible contribution to the counter-terrorist discussion is, however, hampered by many faults that will be discussed in this section and that dedicated to methodology of the work. Looking at the empirical side, there are many incorrect statements – Saddam Hussein was never a head, nor perceived as a head of Al-Qaeda (p. 52), the Figure 23 does not show number of internationally convicted terrorist vis-à-vis number of those jailed in the US, but number of terrorist convicts in the US prisons based on their citizenship, there is unclear linkage between Bangladesh and Pakistani-India dispute that is being drawn (p. 119), the connection of the Bangladeshi contributions to the UN missions to the counter-terrorist strategy is also of unclear value (p. 119) to name few. Also, it is unclear why the US counter-terrorism strategy is dubbed as limited success when the data provided by the author show that the number of attacks on the US soil is very low and the issue is largely foreign-based. On the same note, the data in no way show why the Russian efforts are more successful especially given the misuse of terrorism for achieving other political goals. The issue of centralized nature of the Russian intelligence in a situation of large disputes between the major branches (FSB, GRU, SVR) would also call for a larger debate.

#### **3) Methods:**

The methodology of the work also shows major shortcomings. First, the case selection, while logically based on a level of terrorist threat and respect to the human rights (necessary due to the possible misuse of terrorism charges for attacks on opposition) shows major issues. The second criterion (human rights) is not sufficiently selective. The cases of Russia, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia should, in the opinion of this reviewer, not pass the human right test. The author herself states, for example, “Russia seems to operate off of the understanding that terrorism is synonymous with any activity that can be considered subversive to the Russian government (p. 36).“ Also, the issue of human rights in the case of Saudi Arabia is raised at page 107.

Second problem arises with the evaluation of the efficiency of the counter-terrorist activities. This evaluation is based on three criteria – number of attacks, perception of the population regarding the issue, and number of prisoners related to the terrorist issue. The first criterion is straight-forward but the remaining two are more problematic. It is, for example, unclear, how the overall increase of trust of the Russian population in government and overall decrease in the evaluation of all measured threats tells us anything about the success of the intelligence activities towards the mitigation of the terrorist threat. The third evaluated factor is even more problematic. The author looks at data regarding the overall prison population that is in itself completely irrelevant. Even if the population jailed for terrorist acts only would be monitored, we once again stumble at the problems connected to the case selection.

Third, the thesis states that it aims to develop an understanding of the effectiveness of the intelligence services in the counter-terrorism activities based on their modus operandi. The work itself, however, analyzes overall counter-terrorism strategies of the selected governments (see for example the debate over judicial system in France). The thesis is thus by design unable to provide any conclusions regarding the question at hand and the author’s findings are more based upon some other sources of knowledge than the analysis based inside the work itself. It is hard to judge whether the findings are relevant or not based on what is written in the thesis itself. Finally, the analysis lacks discussion over different contexts of terrorist threat for the different case studies that are necessarily connected to the nature of the counter-reaction.

#### **4) Literature:**

The literature used seems to be relevant although as not an expert on counter-terrorism, I cannot conclusively tell, whether some important piece is missing. Higher reliance upon internet sources given the nature of the work is understandable.

#### **5) Manuscript form:**

There are some minor formal issues such as positioning of some headings on different pages than figures they are related to, different page numbering in table of contents and actual work, and some irregularities in formatting of the text that appear in the electronic version.

**DATE OF EVALUATION:**

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**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	<b>A</b>	= excellent
81 - 90	<b>B</b>	= good
71 – 80	<b>C</b>	= satisfactory
61 - 70	<b>D</b>	= satisfactory
51 - 60	<b>E</b>	
0	<b>F</b>	= fail (not recommended for defence)