

## REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

<b>Title of the thesis:</b>	Understanding The Bear A Neoclassical Realist Analysis of the 2014 Russian Annexation of Crimea
<b>Author of the thesis:</b>	Zenko Synczyszyn
<b>Referee (incl. titles):</b>	<b>PhDr. Michael Romancov, Ph.D.</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>	18
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	20
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	18
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	20
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	19
<b>TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

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

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

The author thoroughly analyzes the theoretical model and why he intends to use it for his work, which is then reflected in the structure of the thesis and the selection of sources on which his argumentation is based. Neoclassical realism Type III seems to be a good choice given the nature of the topic and concrete circumstances of the analyzed case.

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

The topic is undoubtedly highly topical and represents a challenge that the author has managed to fulfill satisfactorily. The text is easy to read, well structured, and provides relevant answers to questions asked by the author. His argumentation is factual, well-founded and convincing.

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

The author consistently adhered to the chosen theoretical model, proceeding carefully and logically.

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

The list of literature and resources is extensive and allowed the author to cover the topic as much as possible. It contains both English and Russian written items, which is an undisputed positive given the nature of the topic.

On the other hand, it is negative that the list is not structured, so it is difficult for the reader to understand how much of the research relies on newspaper articles, political information, or analytical reports and what is based on scientific publications.

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

The thesis is elaborated very carefully. Text is readable and as far as I can judge without any major language problems. Working with literature is in accordance with standards applicable to academic texts, all references are duly and carefully marked.

I do not understand why the maps and schemes used in the work are listed both in the text and then again separately at the end of the work. It's not a mistake, but I find it unnecessary.

**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)