

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

IEPS – International Economic and Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Title of the thesis:	Breaking Down Barriers: Euroregional Cooperation of the Czech Republic
Author of the thesis:	Bc. Karen Benko
Referee (<i>incl. titles</i>):	PhDr. Zuzana Kasáková, 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>	20
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	19
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	19
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	18
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	16
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)	92
The proposed grade (1-2-3-4)	1

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:

Author works with relevant theoretical model. Theory of learning regions discussed within the new regionalism and regional development theory provides the basis for the hypotheses, and research criteria formulation. Research framework is then used for the analysis of four Czech Euroregions.

2) Contribution:

Author provided comprehensive analysis of the topic. She also demonstrated the ability to apply theoretical model on the empiric part of the thesis, which focuses on the analysis of four Czech Euroregions based on three research criteria and their comparison.

3) Methods:

Author used relevant qualitative methods. Theoretical explanations and analytical tools used are appropriate with regard to the research question and hypotheses.

4) Literature:

Author demonstrated remarkably good understanding of relevant literature, which is properly quoted. The range of primary and secondary sources used is adequate for master thesis.

5) Manuscript form:

The thesis is well structured. The author uses appropriate language and style. Tables and maps complement the text appropriately.

DATE OF EVALUATION: 18. 6. 2014

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