

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

Title of the thesis:	Kosovo: Sovereign, Unrecognized or Failed State?
Author of the thesis:	Andrej Semenov
Referee (incl. titles):	Mgr. Martin Riegl, 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>	12
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	12
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	15
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	14
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	14
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)	67
The proposed grade (1-2-3-4)	2

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's research is based on theory of territorial state, state failure, unrecognized states and normative and explanatory theory of secession (with a particular focus on remedial theories of secession), which enables him to elaborate the status of Kosovo which still fails to meet some criteria of statehood. However the paper is under-theorised. The author completely ignores R2P theory, although Kosovo was example where early notions of R2P were used to justify international military intervention to protect civilian populations at risk. There is quite a bit of definitions and terminological discussion but the paper lacks a more profound theoretical discussion, clear explanation of terms where it fits in the relevant literature (eg using terms like failed state, failed almost state).

2) Contribution: The main research question as the thesis title indicates is to answer whether Kosovo is a sovereign, unrecognized, or failed state. Although there is an extensive amount of academic works dealing with the legality or legitimacy of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence, possible consequences of Kosovo's non-consensual secession, comparison with the situation in South Ossetia and Kosovo, mass violations of human rights and related R2P, the role of organized crime or the approach of the parent states and the international community, author's approach is to a certain extent original. While the most authors focus their analysis on legal aspects (ICJ's advisory opinions) and the role of external geopolitical agents, the profound analysis of Kosovo's empirical and juridical (internal and external legitimacy in other words) statehood is missing.

To sum up my review Mr. Semenov presents an analysis of how present day Kosovo's state like institutions function, what is its position in the world system, and what are its geopolitical impacts on the international community. Though the topic is interesting, and deals with a very timely topic, I have identified some areas of concern. Some of author's conclusions are just summarizing well known facts (history of hate speech, historical roots of the conflict dating back to 19th c.) rather than providing clear answers to the main topic: is Kosovo a failed, sovereign or unrecognized state? Also parts of the conclusion are not really empirically grounded (see P 72 L 22) and the conclusion remain vague and flat.

3) Methods: The submitted case study mostly relies on qualitative methods along with ethnographic research method and the participant observation method (p.19).

4) Literature: The author quotes very extensive, relevant (authors like Berg, Buchanan, Crawford Fabry, Touathail or Wolff and many others do figure in the literature) and recent literature which shows that the author has a profound knowledge of the literature concerning the topic. The author further analyzes relevant documents such as resolutions of the UN, ICJ's advisory opinions and other international law documents, but additional review of literature would be beneficial, I'm particular missing works of Caspersen, Stansfield, Allison or Baccheli.

5) Manuscript form: The thesis is clear and well structured into six chapters (including introduction and conclusion), the author uses appropriate language and the thesis has proper academic format. However misspellings and grammar mistakes occur in the thesis, I would also strongly recommend to structure the list of sources into monographs, periodical sources and documents.

I am sympathetic to analysis of the status of present day Kosovo, therefore I can recommend this paper for a defense. I recommend B grade (very good).

DATE OF EVALUATION: 2.6.2015

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