

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

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

Title of the thesis:	Assessing the role of the São Paulo Forum in Brazilian foreign policy. A neoclassical realist perspective
Author of the thesis:	Anna Novichkova
Referee (incl. titles):	Mgr. Martin Riegl, PhD.

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>	18
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	19
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	19
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	15
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)	91
The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)	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:

The author has chosen an original topic of Sao Paolo Forum's role in shaping foreign policy of Brazil. In order to achieve the goal of the thesis, Anna framed her work within a neoclassical realist theory which server her as an adequate theoretical ground for insightful analysis. In general the theoretical part of the thesis helps author to reach a meaningful conclusions.

2) Contribution:

The goal of the thesis is to analyze the driving forces lying behind Brazil's decision to be a part of the regional integration process. The time framework of Anna's analysis dates back to the year in 2003, when the Workers' Party came to power in the capital. Another goal is to explain the role of the international governmental organization named the São Paulo Forum and to answer whether this should also be perceived through the lenses of the neoclassical realist theory. All questions are thoroughly analyzed throughout the thesis and it can be concluded the author has fulfilled the goal she declared in the introduction, however the analysis of the Sao Paulo Forum would deserve a more detailed focus. All the conclusion she has drawn are relevant and based on the solid theoretical ground as well as the analysis of relevant information that has been gathered.

3) Methods:

The author has built methodological part upon the use of a theory application approach as she explicitly states. The empirical part comprising a single study of the Brazil's foreign policy between the years 2003-2016, with a particular attention devoted to the sphere of regional integration processes in South America.

4) Literature:

The author has compiled a sufficient amount of relevant sources which she critically uses throughout her paper.

5) Manuscript form:

The thesis meets all formal criteria for Master thesis required by the Faculty of Social Science, including the scope of the thesis, linguistic standards, and structure of the thesis. What looks a bit weird is the chapter numbering. The introduction is followed by chapter one (literature review) which gives a bit awkward impression. I would recommend to include the chapter in the introduction or theoretical and methodological part.

DATE OF EVALUATION: 2 February 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	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