

# Assessment of Master Thesis – Opponent



Study programme: **International Economic Relations**

Field of study: **International and Diplomatic Studies**

Academic year: **2018/2019**

Master Thesis Topic: **A preliminary assessment of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as an economic diplomacy strategy and its impact on national-EU political dynamism in Europe.**

Author's name: **Shet Yuan Soo**

Ac. Consultant's Name: **Jeremy Alan Garlick, M.A., Ph.D.**

Opponent: **Ing. PhDr. Radka Havlová, Ph.D.**

	Criterion	Mark (1–4)
1.	Overall objective achievement	<b>1</b>
2.	Logical structure	<b>1</b>
3.	Using of literature, citations	<b>1</b>
4.	Adequacy of methods used	<b>1</b>
5.	Depth of analysis	<b>2</b>
6.	Self-reliance of author	<b>1</b>
7.	Formal requirements: text, graphs, tables	<b>1</b>
8.	Language and stylistics	<b>2</b>

## Comments and Questions:

The thesis discusses the recently rather popular topic of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Many articles and books have been published on this topic, therefore I really appreciate the ability of the student to find a "research gap" in focusing not only on the BRI itself, but in particular on the idea of the BRI as a tool of economic diplomacy and its impact on the relations with the EU. This is fully in line with the objective of the thesis to "establish a preliminary understanding and interpretation of PRC's Belt-and-Road Initiative (known and referred to as BRI onwards) from the perspectives of Economic Diplomacy" (p. 14).

I in particular appreciate the theoretical part of the thesis (mainly chapter 2 of the thesis focusing on the differences between Chinese and European approach towards the economic diplomacy), which is written in a manner far beyond what is expected from a Master thesis and could be, with a few arrangements, published in some academic journal. The quality of the thesis is also improved by the fact that the student uses a wide range of resources, including Chinese resources which enabled the students to capture and evaluate the BRI from many various perspectives.

The empirical part (in particular chapters 6 and 7) is in a way weaker, it would be good if the student was able to elaborate in more depth the impact of the BRI on EU. However, I understand the scope of thesis did probably not enable such analysis, and I think excellent quality of the theoretical part of the thesis fully compensate this omission.

In general the thesis fulfills all requirements and can be recommended for defense with suggested grading "excellent" (1).

Question for defense: In line with the research objective, could you please evaluate the BRI as a tool of Chinese economic diplomacy? Is the Chinese notion of economic diplomacy different from the European understanding of economic diplomacy? Please explain.

**Conclusion: The Master Thesis is recommended for the defence.**

Suggested Grade:     **1**

Date: 02/01/2019

**Ing. PhDr. Radka Havlová, Ph.D.**  
Opponent