

Assessment of Master Thesis – Opponent



Study programme: **International Economic Relations**

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

Academic year: **2018/2019**

Master Thesis Topic: **Russian geopolitical interests in Eastern Ukraine and scenarios of future development**

Author's name: **Daniel Hänninen**

Ac. Consultant's Name: **Ing. Jan Martin Rolenc, Ph.D.**

Opponent: **Mgr. Miloslav Machoň, Ph.D.**

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

Comments and Questions:

The submitted master thesis dealt with recent and relevant topic of the IR. Its main aim is an interpretative analysis of Russian geopolitical interests in eastern Ukraine. The theoretical approach is based on realism, Eurasianism and scenario analysis. The theoretical chapter elaborates set of assumptions of realism in the IR, including game theory perspective and Eurasianism concept in the context of nationalism ideology.

The empirical part composes of three chapters that explain the historical ties of the eastern Ukraine and Russia, current state of affairs and the final analysis of possible outcomes of Russian activity in the region in the future. In the context of historical ties of the region, thesis highlights territorial and political changes since 1991, as well as, the war in Donbass region. Main attention devotes to the interpretation of recent Russian interests in the region, including implementation of security and foreign policy towards the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic.

Major strength of the proposed thesis is an examination the newest scholar literature and sources, including original materials written in Russian language. The language style is also attractive, the thesis limits using of the passive verb form. Supplementary maps, tables and diagrams help to clarify major conclusions of the thesis. Furthermore, the submitted text fulfils formal requirements for the master's thesis in the University of Economics, Prague.

Major weakness arises from insufficient operationalization of the research question and subsequent hypothesis. The introduction does not contain the state-of-the-art section, as well as the information regarding broader theoretical framework. Unfortunately, the theoretical chapter includes general ideas of the realism approach in the IR only. The missing interlinks of the premises of realism, Eurasianism with the aim of the thesis contributes to the descriptive character of major empirical chapter of the thesis. So, the presented conclusions are less persuasive.

Questions:

1. The empirical parts devote to Russian interests in the eastern Ukraine. How were the Russian interests influenced by the EU foreign policy towards Ukraine? Compare the EU's foreign policy objectives towards Ukraine before, and after Euromaidan events, please.
2. How recent scholar literature reflects the validity of the premises written by Samuel Huntington in The Clash of Civilisations about the division of the Ukrainian territory?

Conclusion: The Master Thesis is recommended for the defence.

Suggested Grade: **2**

Date: 15/05/2019

Mgr. Miloslav Machoň, Ph.D.

Opponent