

MASTER'S THESIS REPORT

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

Thesis title:	The Impact of Political Culture on the Development of Countries: In Search of a Theory
Student's name:	Aldi Shehu
Supervisor's name:	Janusz Salamon

Criteria	Maximum	Points
Contribution and argument (originality, justifiable research question and hypotheses, argumentation)	25	23
Theoretical framework (situating research into the existing knowledge)	25	23
Methodology (methods and data relevant to the research question and appropriately used)	20	18
Referencing to sources	15	15
Formal aspects (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	10	9
Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	5	5
Total	100	93

Plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score (if the plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score is above 15%, the reviewer has to include his/her assessment of the originality of the reviewed thesis in his/her review):

Reviewer's commentary according to the above criteria:

In his work, Aldi Shehu undertook the challenge of attempting to theorise the famously controversial (and probably for this reason rarely discussed in the scholarly literature) thesis about the decisive impact of political culture (inclusive of political virtues and vices, creativity, industriousness and cooperativeness, the inclination to follow established laws and regulations) which Rawls' own doctoral student, Thomas Pogge, called „the thesis about domestic causation of poverty“ and countered it with his own thesis about the international causation of poverty (as a result of exploitation of the weak countries by the strong, facilitated by the unfair rules of the global trade régime and the natural resource privilege and the borrowing privilege). Aldi Shehu's thesis negotiates a middle ground between these two influential positions by arguing for the fundamental soundness of Rawls' claim while admitting the significant impact that international context may have on the domestic development and relating the impact of the domestic and the international factors within his overarching theory of the impact of political culture on country's development. Perhaps the most commendable aspect of Aldi Shehu's work is his independence and creativity in crafting his project's theoretical and methodological framework in order to deal with the relative scarcity of the scholarly contributions relevant to the topic at hand, including defining political culture and relating it to the concept of development in ways that facilitates his probing of Rawls' hypothesis. Perhaps the most adventurous aspect of his methodological approach is employing a mixed-methods research design, combining qualitative analysis of the available limited literature on political culture with and semi-structured interviews with quantitative analysis of survey data. This is to be applauded, so far as it brings to the discussion of the issue the empirical dimension that is lacking in Rawls and Pogge, although the usefulness of the interviews component proved to be limited in that it strengthen Aldi Shehu's line of argument only indirectly, namely in showing that the (low) level of political culture can manifest itself also in the inability to reflect on the importance of political culture to the development of one's country. The outcome of this time-consuming component of his research project could not be predicted in advance and thus its inclusion in the thesis is understandable, however with a hindsight one senses that this data gathering and analysis could be

designed differently to end up with even more solid support for the defended research hypothesis. Setting the scholarly exercise of considering the plausibility of Rawls' thesis in a context of the Albanian political culture with which the Author is intimately familiar adds a whole new layer to the quality and plausibility of his analysis, given that Rawls limits himself to only anecdotal examples of the impact of political culture on the development of countries.

Proposed grade: A

Suggested questions for the defence:

Given the outcome of the interview component of the thesis, would you – with a hindsight – design this element of your research project differently?

I recommend the thesis for the final defence.

Signature

Overall grading scheme at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University:

Total Points	Grade	Quality standard
91–100	A	= outstanding (high honour)
81–90	B	= superior (honour)
71–80	C	= good
61–70	D	= satisfactory
51–60	E	= low pass at a margin of failure
0–50	F	= failing, the thesis is not recommended for defence