



## Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Bc. Hugo Kafka

Title: Russian integration into the liberal security order

Programme/year: Security Studies/2018

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/external assessor): Mgr. Nikita Odintsov

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
<b>Major Criteria</b>			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	5
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	17
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	30
<i>Total</i>		<b>80</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
	Sources	10	8
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>70</b>



## Evaluation

Major criteria:

The text of the diploma thesis focuses on the evaluation of the Russian Federation integration into the Western (or the US) dominated international security order. It is done by the comparison of Russian policy towards three conflicts: Bosnian War, Kosovo War and Syrian War. The author concludes that the Russian integration failed. One of the primary reasons was NATO's ignorance of Russia's opposition to the use of force against Yugoslavia.

One of the indicators of Russian stance towards these conflicts is its military might. The author writes about the rise of Russian military power which then enabled the more assertive foreign policy, but unfortunately, we do not see this argument backed by data. The author does not present a clear correlation between the rise of military power and change of Russian diplomacy. Accordingly, a theoretical chapter would have benefited if the question of power was discussed. The relationship between military power and attitude to the selected conflicts is a direct one. The author could discuss what kind of forces Russia modernized in the first place. If Russia, for example, modernized primary ground forces and overlooked airpower, naval forces or special forces, its attitude towards conflict in Syria could be quite different, even if Russian military were stronger than it was during the previous two conflicts.

I am also not sure if the author provides a sufficient answer to the question he mentions at the beginning. Did Russia genuinely want integration into the Western order, or it just pretended this political course during the period of weakness? In other words, was (is) Russia a revisionist power or not? The author concludes that it "depends." However, my understanding of the thesis' goals is that the selected cases should answer this question.

This leads to the next weak point of the thesis. Unfortunately, I could not find clear goals and research questions. Therefore, it was not sufficiently clear what the author wants to



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show us with his selected cases. These goals and research questions we can find only in the research proposal attached to the dissertation.

As regards to the theoretical and methodological sections, I think that the author correctly pointed out that after the Cold War there was not a clear definition of what the “new world order” looks like. No formal treaty that would have officially concluded the Cold War was ever signed (if one does not count the Malta Summit and the Paris Charter). However, I am afraid that the master thesis cannot build only on John Ikenberry. There are other authors that write about the international order, hegemonic stability or balance of power and balance of interests. Since the author studies the degree of Russian integration into the Western world order; the nature of the order should be better discussed. The author further states that he specifically focuses “on the cooperation or clashes with regard to conflict management and conflict resolution in three specific wars (p. 5). It is not clear, however, how the different types of international order are related to the conflict management or conflict resolution. Even though Russian attitude towards conflict resolution or management is crucial for estimation of Russian level of integration into the international order, the concepts of conflict management and conflict resolution were not discussed at all. Additionally, the peace enforcement also looks like a relevant concept for Balkan wars. However, that was not discussed.

The author writes that “integration is not a binary variable with “integrated/not integrated” modes, but is instead a spectrum (p. 4).” The integration itself should be then according to the author consistent with “cooperation, inclusion in multilateral action, coordination or sacrifice of own interest to accommodate the community.” From the analysis, it was not sufficiently clear how much Russia was integrated. The clear statement we can find only at the very end of the Thesis, namely in summary (p. 43-44), where he states that the integration largely failed. The thesis also does not sufficiently clarify the methodology the author used in his analysis. On the positive side, the author mentioned the limitations of his research and addressed them. However, his decision to exclude the war in Iraq from the analysis should be better explained.



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As regards to the analysis itself, the author provides interesting and coherent insight into the evolution and actors' positions regarding these three conflicts. If this part is taken in isolation from the theoretical chapter, then we can read analytically well founded and coherent text. Yet the linkage with the theoretical part is rather limited. It also suffers from the unclear research goals. The author on page 5 explicitly states: "I focus on the specific issue of cooperation between states in times of crisis – conflict management and conflict resolution." Not only, as it was mentioned, the theoretical part does not sufficiently discuss these two concepts, but even the actual analysis barely mentions them.

### Minor criteria:

As regards to minor criteria, I think that the author fulfilled all formal requirements. I would only point out the lack of Russian sources. There is only one book by a Russian author (Arbatov, 2008). The author could, for example, add Dmitri Trenin. Additionally, there is a lack of literature review. Therefore, it is not clear how much this topic has been discussed by other authors. Additionally, as it was mentioned, the theoretical part is represented only by Ikenberry.

### Overall evaluation:

The author provides a very interesting and timely analysis of Russian integration into the Western-led liberal security order. On balance, the empirical part is much better than the theoretical and methodological parts. The concepts are not sufficiently elaborated, and they are not sufficiently integrated into the empirical discussion.

Therefore, I would suggest that the author during his defense clarifies his research objectives and research questions, elaborates his concepts (namely conflict resolution, conflict management, cooperation, inclusion in multilateral action, coordination or sacrifice of own interest to accommodate the community) and links them to his empirical findings.



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Suggested grade:

**D**

Signature: *Cyran*