



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Niclas Schlecht

Title: Effects of the Brexit referendum on the Common Security and Defence Policy

Programme/year: ISSA 2018/2019

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/external assessor): Aliaksei Kazharski

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	2
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	30
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	37
<i>Total</i>		<i>80</i>	69
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	4
	Formal requirements	5	3
<i>Total</i>		<i>20</i>	17
TOTAL		100	86



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The thesis is rich in empirics and has a theoretical underpinning. The main problem is that it lacks a proper research question. A typical mistake is made where the author launches a historical background summary instead of discussing the research problem. The author formulates two hypotheses (which to my mind are actually one, as they are simply opposite statements). But a hypothesis is usually an answer to a research question. What is the question here? On p. 27 the author states that “the objective of this chapter is to provide a theory-driven explanation of the CSDP as defined by domestic politics, following a liberal, rationalist approach.” But why does the CSDP have to be explained in the first place? What is the puzzle?

The standard approach is missing here which the structure of the thesis also sort of reflects: Introduction=> Historical background=>Theory=>Hypothesis=>Methodology=>Analysis. I think it's a bit of a strange way to organize the paper.

Methodology: it seems that the discourse analysis part of the methodological section lacks the specification of which texts were included in the sample.

Minor criteria:

I believe that the ANALYSIS part (the empirical chapter) should have been better structured. In particular, since the author is employing different methodologies (document analysis and discourse) – which also suggest different theoretical perspectives – I would like to see which parts of the analysis are related to which one.

To “proceed chronologically” as the author promises on p. 51 is generally not a good idea. The text should not be structured by the chronology of the events but by the logic of the argument. Otherwise it's a synopsis not an analysis.

Overall evaluation:

We discussed the research project with the author at a very early stage and then he did not really stay in touch, so I did not have a chance to influence further developments, including the choice of theory and methodology or the formulation of the research problem. I'm guessing the other supervisor may have played this role.



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Suggested grade: 86 (B)

Signature: