

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

GPS – Geopolitical Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Title of the thesis:	Comparative Study of Saudia Arabia's and Iran's foreign policies towards U.S. designated terrorist organizations in Middle East
Author of the thesis:	Edin Bajramović
Referee (incl. titles):	Martin Riegl

Remark: It is a standard at the FSV UK that the Referee's Report is at least 500 words long. In case you will assess the thesis as "non-defendable", please explain the concrete reasons for that in detail.

SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED (for details, see below):

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Theoretical background (max. 20)</i>	15
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	17
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	20
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	18
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	5
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)	75
The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)	Excellent

Comments of the referee on the thesis highlights and shortcomings (following the 5 numbered aspects of your assessment indicated below).

1) Theoretical background:

The author has framed his research within the realist tradition of analysis/interpretation of foreign policy, namely of Iran and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Such an approach is a right way for understanding the foreign policy of these two rival regional powers towards selected terrorist organizations. More detailed and explicit discussion of theoretical approach would be welcome, as reader is somehow expected to read between lines.

2) Contribution:

Edin has identified two concrete hypotheses which are: "1) Iran's foreign policy towards these four terrorist groups is in various ways compatible with U.S. counterterrorism policy 2) SA's foreign policy towards these four terrorist groups is in various ways not compatible with U.S." (p. 10), which I can not make any objections to. The empirical part of the paper is well written, informed, the author is clearly knowledgeable and offers several interesting insights. However, the above mentioned hypotheses are somehow disconnected from the main findings presented by author.

3) Methods:

Author's research is based on utilization of comparative approach/analysis of Teheran's and Riyadh's foreign policy towards selected terrorist organizations (Hezbollah, Hamas, Al Qaeda, ISIL) (p. 10).

4) Literature:

This part of the paper is a stronger side, the author has gathered sufficient bunch of relevant resources which are used throughout his thesis.

5) Manuscript form:

Unfortunately, this is the weakest part of the paper. There is a whole and extensive list of deficiencies, both minor but also major. Starting from the missing chapter numbering (in the outline, to rather poor layout, differing style of quotations just to name some, or missing thesis project. Additional proofreading would be beneficial and it's rather obvious that the paper has been completed at the very last moment. Nevertheless, it fulfills minimal standards required. The overall standard of language is very good and the paper has clearly and logically defined structure which allows a fluent reading.

DATE OF EVALUATION:

Referee Signature

The referee should give comments to the following requirements:

1) THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: Can you recognize that the thesis was guided by some **theoretical fundamentals** relevant for this thesis topic? Were some important theoretical concepts omitted? Was the theory used in the thesis consistently incorporated with the topic and hypotheses tested?

Strong Average Weak
20 10 0 points

2) CONTRIBUTION: Evaluate if the author presents **original ideas** on the topic and aims at demonstrating **critical thinking** and ability to draw conclusions based on the knowledge of relevant theory and relevant empirical material. Is there a distinct **value added** of the thesis (relative to knowledge of a university-educated person interested in given topic)? Did the author explain **why** the observed phenomena occurred? Were the policy implications well founded?

Strong Average Weak
20 10 0 points

3) METHODS: Are the **hypotheses** for this study clearly stated, allowing their further verification and testing? Are the theoretical explanations, empirical material and **analytical tools** used in the thesis relevant to the research question being investigated, and adequate to the aspiration level of the study? Is the thesis **topic comprehensively analyzed** and does the thesis not make trivial or irrelevant detours off the main body stated in the thesis proposal? More than 10 points signal an exceptional work, **which requires your explanation "why" it is so**.

Strong Average Weak
20 10 0 points

4) LITERATURE REVIEW: The thesis demonstrates author's full understanding and **command of recent literature**. The author quotes relevant literature in a proper way and disposes with a representative bibliography. (Remark: references to Wikipedia, websites and newspaper articles are a sign of **poor research**). If they dominate you cannot give more than 8 points. References to books published by prestigious publishers and articles in renowned journals give much better impression.

Strong Average Weak
20 10 0 points

5) MANUSCRIPT FORM: The thesis is **clear and well structured**. The author uses appropriate language and style, including academic **format** for quotations, graphs and tables. The text effectively refers to graphs and tables, is easily readable and **stimulates thinking**.

Strong Average Weak
20 10 0 points

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Czech grading
91 – 100	A	= excellent
81 - 90	B	= good
71 – 80	C	= satisfactory
61 - 70	D	= satisfactory
51 - 60	E	
0	F	= fail (not recommended for defence)