



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Ilyas Sharibzhanov

Title: Drug policy in the ex-Soviet states after the introduction of new policies in the West: Clandestine Drug Trade and State-Crime-Terror Nexus in the former Soviet Union

Programme/year: ISS, 2018

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/external assessor): Emil Aslan (Souleimanov)

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	6
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	25
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	20
<i>Total</i>		80	51
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	10
<i>Total</i>		20	20



TOTAL

100

Evaluation

Major criteria:

Unfortunately, the thesis lacks explicitly formulated research questions or hypotheses, although it is (likely) framed as an analysis of the crime-state-drug nexus, in itself an enormously challenging objective, using a large-data overview of recent secondary sources. One of the thesis's main findings is rather banal as it implies that "various FSU states have shown varying degrees of connection to the criminal world", an intuitive finding that was in no need of large-data analysis.

The other key finding of the thesis, namely the fact that such-crime nexus poses a "security risk due to the criminal underworld's involvement with clandestine drug trade in connection with terrorist groups" is yet to be revealed as it is not properly supported by the data presented. An analysis of this phenomenon is lacking, as well. Moreover, the drug-terrorism nexus has not been researched, perhaps due to the author's emphasis on a broader research agenda, yet a systematic study of drug-terrorism nexus in the post-Soviet area, and with respect to its various aspects, is an objective that this thesis might have been focused on.

Minor criteria:

The literature review is solid, but it is not focused due to the lack of explicitly stated research questions that might have led the thesis.

Overall evaluation:

A thesis that holds potential, solidly executed, and with nuanced empirical and broader theoretical knowledge, yet lacking on the focus and therefore brining little innovative knowledge to the state of the art.

Suggested grade: C

Signature:

Emil Aslan (Souleimanov)



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