



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Berk Köksal

Title: Comparative Negotiation Analysis of the Syrian Peace Process

Programme/year: Master in International Relations

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Jan Karlas

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	27
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	35
<i>Total</i>		80	72
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	20
TOTAL		100	92



Evaluation

Major criteria:

This M.A. thesis deals with an interesting and recent topic of the peace negotiations on the conflict in Syria. It needs to be appreciated that the author seeks to connect the topic with the theories of international negotiations, which is a very original and relevant attempt.

At the core of the thesis, two parallel peace processes are compared: the Astana and the Geneva process. The author comes to the conclusion that the Astana process has been relatively more successful in delivering some results. To some extent, the thesis focuses on a real puzzle: the Geneva process was supported by the universal UN, but the major actors of the Astana process are traditional rivals. Hence, the outcomes of the two peace processes are not obvious.

In the next part, the author formulates the following three explanations for the relative success of the Astana process: 1) power capabilities of the leaders in negotiations (realism), 2) convergence of the interests of the participants in negotiations, and 3) the procedures of negotiations and their related justice.

The work with theories is relatively sophisticated and correct. As such, the thesis has a very good analytical design.

The empirical part is well done. The author managed to gather the necessary data for each of the analyzed factors. In particular when judging power capabilities of the actors, he produced a very systematic and detailed comparison. He differentiates several categories of capabilities/influence that he then analyzes empirically. He finds out that the capabilities of the leaders participating in the Astana negotiations somewhat surpass those of the other participants in the Geneva negotiations (EU, USA). Yet, one critical remark would be that the author could differentiate more clearly between capabilities and influence.

Minor criteria:

No comments



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Overall evaluation:

I highly appreciate the originality of the topic. The author also identifies a genuine puzzle. What also needs to be appreciated is a good application of the theories and a very sound empirical work. The thesis comes to a valid conclusion, which stresses the effects of the capabilities of actors on the success of peace negotiations on the Syrian conflict.

Suggested grade:

A

Signature: