

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

IEPS – International Economic and Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Title of the thesis:	Simplified decision-making or concealed strategy? A test of Peter Coleman's Attractor Landscape Model using a comparative case study of the Israel-Palestine peace process 2007-2011
Author of the thesis:	James Pepper
Referee (incl. titles):	Mgr. Martin Riegl, Ph.D.

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>	20
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	19
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	19
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	20
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	18
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)	96
The proposed grade (1-2-3-4)	1

You can even use a decimal point (e.g. giving the grade of 2.5 for 60 points).

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

1) Theoretical background:

Author's research of Israel-Palestine conflict, which is not only a typical example of intractable conflicts, is framed within the conflict resolution theory, which is a relevant starting point for presented research. The author starts with a thorough review of the theoretical literature on the subject of intractable conflicts. The aim of the thesis is to test the validity and explanatory power of Attractor Landscape Model (ALM) (which is stressing the importance of social psychology) on the case study of the Israeli-Palestine conflict during the 2007-2011 peace process. To do so he has defined six hypotheses tackling lack of innovative approach of negotiators. The theoretical part of the paper does not have any weak part and provides author with a rock-solid framework for his empirical research.

2) Contribution: The objective of this thesis is to analyze a validity of ALM on the case study of Israeli-Palestine conflict. It is not only a model of intractable conflict, but given the importance of the region also a headache of the international community and all parties politically or geographically involved since 1945. Besides that this particular conflict has proved to have a potential to destabilize the region itself (making it one of few shatter-belts as coined by S.Cohen), but also to damage inter-state and global relations. James has come up with a unique research angle which reveals important findings related to the current stalemate but also identifies possible opportunities for further academic research or policy recommendations. I find the contribution of James impressive and his conclusions realistic, original and inspiring for policy makers.

3) Methods: Methodology is clearly stated as well as all six hypotheses put forward are clearly defined and conclusively elaborated, more importantly the authors has managed to test all of them and the conclusion provides clear answers to all questions raised by the author. What I do appreciate is author's decision to build his case study on primary sources gathered during interviews conducted by the author, which is the most difficult way he might have chosen.

4) Literature: The author quotes very extensive, relevant (especially theoretical) and recent literature which shows that the author has a profound knowledge of the literature concerning the topic. More importantly, the case study gathers data from primary sources (interviews with key negotiators in the peace process conducted by the author 2016-2017). Overall the work with sources is rather exceptional.

5) Manuscript form: The thesis is clear and well structured, however it's also very ambitious and covers a lot of ground. James has conducted truly dutiful and exceptional approach), the author uses appropriate language and the thesis has proper academic format. I can recommend this paper for a defence. To um up my review, the submitted paper meets all formal criteria set up by the Institute of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, exceeds the standards for master level thesis and therefore I recommend to grade it excellent (A mark).

DATE OF EVALUATION: 23.5.2017

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	US grading
81 – 100	1	= excellent	= A
61 – 80	2	= good	= B
51 – 60	3	= satisfactory	= C
41 – 50	3	= satisfactory	= D
0 – 40	4	= fail	= not recommended for defence