



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Bengi Kolay

Title: *Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant and Energy Diplomacy: How Construction of the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant affected Energy diplomacy between Turkey and Russia? A process Tracing Approach.*

Programme/year: Security Studies

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/second reader): Jan Ludvik, Ph.D.

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	4
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	15
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	20
<i>Total</i>		80	39
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	5
	Style	5	2
	Formal requirements	5	4
<i>Total</i>		20	11
TOTAL		100	50



Evaluation

Major criteria:

- 1) I think the introduction would benefit from further elaboration of research objectives. I am not really sure what the thesis is trying to achieve (and analyze). The introduction claims that *"The Akkuyu and interconnected topics have not been studied and have not been analyzed fully. Energy diplomacy in relation to Turkey and Russia has not been fully studied either and has a limited literature. To study this the research question was formulated as such: Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant and Energy diplomacy between Turkey and Russia ? A Process Tracing Approach"* (p.13). That the research question is not even a question is deeply problematic. Furthermore, that something has not been studied is not an adequate justification for studying it. The thesis should refine its research question and provide a proper rationale for why the question needs studying.
- 2) I appreciate that the structure contains all aspects that the thesis should contain: introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, case study, findings and discussion, and conclusions—however, each of these needs refinement.
- 3) The literature review should focus on reviewing the existing literature. It should basically say how other people answer my research question. In its current form, the literature review provides interesting context, but it is not literature review. It describes things like the evolution of relations between Russia and Turkey, but it does not analyze (or at least summarize) the existing literature about the relations between Russia and Turkey, etc.
- 4) The theoretical section provides some embryonic discussion of concepts of energy diplomacy, energy security, and coercive diplomacy. However, most of the section also provides a description of the context, like relations between Russia and Turkey.
- 5) I really appreciate the attempt to have conscious and rigorous qualitative hypothesis testing. The methodological section is the strongest part of this dissertation. However, it focuses too much on what the process tracing is and what the four tests that the dissertation intends to employ are and too little on describing how the dissertation actually executes the methodology (e.g. what are the evidentiary standards, data, etc.)
- 6) The thesis presents several hypotheses, but it lacks justification. Why these hypotheses and not some other? How are the hypotheses connected to the theory and methods? I still appreciate that the thesis tries to test hypotheses with qualitative methods, but it needs refinement.
- 7) The thesis claims to execute process tracing, but there is no real empirical part.
- 8) The discussion and conclusion appear to be a mix of random ideas. It needs argument (or several arguments).



Minor criteria:

- 9) I think the thesis needs to draw more from the standard academic literature in the field of its study. The sources that are consulted/engaged appear quite random and omit a wealth of the most influential sources about energy security, energy diplomacy, and Russia–Turkey relations. I am not an expert on this specific subfield, but even a non-expert can see it. I searched Google Scholar for energy security, energy diplomacy, and Russia – Russia-Turkey relations and searched the thesis for references to the highest-ranked sources from Google Scholar. That I did not find any of these among the references is deeply problematic.
- 10) I think some extra work is needed with the formatting of citations and references. The citations and references need to be consistent throughout the text and should follow a standard style. References need to be clearly attributed, not just like:
- a. Köstem, S. (n.d.). The Political Economy of Turkish-Russian Relations: Dynamics of Asymmetric Interdependence.
 - b. Massalin, E. (n.d.). Strategic Analysis on the Energy Security Measures of Russia.
 - c. Morales, J. (n.d.). Russia’s New National Security Strategy.
 - d. On Birinci Kalkınma Planı 2019-2023. (n.d.).
 - e. Orta Vadeli Program (2023-2025). (n.d.).
- 11) I think the style and language might be the biggest single problem of this thesis. The thesis could benefit from further language refinement to enhance clarity and readability. Some problems are minor, though they make the thesis look unfinished and unprofessional. These are issues like erroneous capitalizations. It looks bad but does not hamper understanding of the argument. Some are more problematic, like the usage of abbreviations without explanations. It took me a few pages to conclude that PT is an abbreviation for process tracing. Moreover, there are even sections where the language makes it challenging to grasp the intended meaning. I think some problems with the “major criteria” that I am describing above, albeit not all of them, could be attributed to language and style.



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Assessment of plagiarism:

Based on the anti-plagiarism software checks, it is formally confirmed that the submitted thesis is original and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not, in an ethically unacceptable manner, draw from the works of other authors.

Overall evaluation:

The thesis delves into something about the relationship between Turkey and Russia in the context of something which is called the Akkuyu nuclear power plant, which I suspect is a nuclear power project plant under construction or consideration in Turkey. That I cannot even say whether it is a project under consideration, construction, or even a finished power plant is a testament to the thesis's many problems. So is its research question "Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant and Energy diplomacy between Turkey and Russia?" which is even not a question and leaves the reader guessing what is the specific focus of the thesis.

I think the thesis needs refinement before being suitable for defense. It should do more to outline clear objectives, provide the rationale for these objectives, review how others answered the same (and similar) questions, outline clearer theory, and provide detailed empirical analysis. Having said that, I admit it is difficult to make a final judgment about this thesis. Some issues might be caused by the language. While the program is taught in English and adequate mastery is expected, I have an empathy for non-native speakers who might be struggling with the language. Some of these language issues might be clarified during the defense, and I am leaving it to the committee to decide whether the thesis demonstrates minimal achievement of intended learning outcomes for a master's degree.

Suggested grade: E / F

Signature: