



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Bengi Kolay

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

Programme/year: IMSISS/SS/ 2023

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Jitka Holubcová

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



Evaluation

Major criteria:

- *Research question, definition of objectives*

In her MT, Mrs. Kolay analyzes impact of a nuclear built on bilateral diplomatic relations. I welcome the choice of the research question, namely “Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant and Energy Diplomacy: How construction of the Akkuyu NPP affected Energy diplomacy between Turkey and Russia?” for the following reasons:

Cooperation in the field of nuclear energy creates long-term ties. These ties shall bundle the territories in question on multiple levels stretching from diplomatic, technical, logistical to a pure economic level. Mrs. Kolay’s analyses concern a first of its kind realization of the “BOO concept” (build-own-operate) in the politico-economic environment of vertically integrated energy companies, bringing substantial benefits to the nuclear technology provider. On top of that, the analysis stretches from 2010 to 2023, a period witnessing unprecedented armed conflict in Ukraine resulting into series of embargoes against the Russian Federation. This wider political context, pushing the Russian Federation into a political, economic and moral outskirts of the international community, puts the commissioning of the very first nuclear power plant in Turkey into a new geopolitical light. Analyzing the motivations behind the Akkuyu NPP built thus gains a new, interesting meaning for the sphere of international relations.

The 3 hypotheses are well tailored and allow for solving the research question. Analyzed about 10-year preparatory phase of the built provides for a reasonable timeframe for studying diplomatic and non-diplomatic events on both Russian and Turkish side. Rival hypotheses serve as a necessary verification tool given the chosen analytical method (process tracing). It needs to be underscored, that finding evidence for diplomatic measures is not always possible given the nature of diplomacy itself. For that reason, verifying the assumed hypothesis on a more traceable facts, such as economic considerations and population growth is practical. I understand that combination of H1 and H2 enables to weight the diplomatic interests on one side and economic considerations on the other. H3 enables to clarify the nature of influence of the construction of Akkuyu NPP on the bilateral relations.



- *Theoretical/conceptual framework*

Mrs. Kolay's analysis revolves around the notions of diplomacy, coercive diplomacy, energy diplomacy, energy security and Russian-Turkish relations. All these aspects were sufficiently explained and tackled. Author includes both academic and rather a functional perspective. This approach is practical for framing an analysis in the area of energy diplomacy.

- *Methodology, analysis, argument*

I consider the choice of the process tracing (PT) method as a pertinent method, even though application of this method is unusual and leads to difficult analytical work. The level of unknown and unprovable is generally relatively high and there are high needs on the analyst to draw possible alternative scenarios and evaluate them while taking the deductive approach. Despite these constraints, Mrs. Kolay was able to apply PT method successfully and was able to test relation between dependent and independent variables. Causality between them and alternative explanations were tested on rival hypotheses. I particularly welcome inclusion of the four tests (straw in the wind, hoop test, smoking gun and doubly decisive) and the rating scale to add tangible measuring of the results of the PT analysis. The timeline for PT constructed by Mrs. Kolay comprises all the main events and publicly available pieces of information. Argumentation derived from the timelines follows the logic of the previously crafted academic framing.

Minor criteria:

Sources, style, formal requirements:

I rate the scope of the literature used as suitable. Adequate primary sources were used. Author demonstrated ability to navigate the professional text and analyze it through the selected methodology. Author expresses herself clearly, although in some places the structure of the work is very complex. The work meets the formal requirements for a diploma thesis.

Assessment of plagiarism:

There is no evidence of plagiarism in this master thesis.



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Overall evaluation:

In her diploma thesis, Mrs. Kolay confirmed her ability to independently work on a given topic and conduct research according to the chosen method. Author made excellent use of all steps of the process tracing method and tested the results with additional tests. She created her own rating to add weight and transparency to the outcomes. Finally, I admire how Mrs. Kolay relentlessly stuck to her interest to analyze her original educated guess and how she worked hard on deploying the process tracing method despite the complex nature of the chosen method.

Suggested grade: A

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jitka Holubová'.