



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Jaklin Atanasova

Title: Russia's Use of the "Energy Weapon" and Bulgaria's Foreign Policy

Alignment: Balancing Dependence on Russian Natural Gas Supplies

Programme/year: International Security Studies / 2024

Author of Evaluation (second reader): Jan Ludvik

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	8
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	25
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	39
<i>Total</i>		80	72
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	9
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	19
TOTAL		100	91



Evaluation

Major criteria:

Thank you for the opportunity to read your thesis. It was a pleasure to engage with your work, and I commend you for presenting a systematic, methodologically sound analysis of a clearly delineated corpus of data. This is an exemplary approach for an analytical paper, and your effort in this regard deserves recognition. While there is always room for improvement, the following comments are intended to highlight areas where your thesis could be further strengthened. However, it is important to note that these are relatively minor critiques or suggestions aimed at enhancing a more advanced level of analysis, which may exceed the intended learning outcomes at the master's level.

- Your introduction is commendable for directly introducing the analysis rather than merely discussing the broad topic. This approach is both effective and engaging. However, it would be beneficial to further elaborate on the significance of your study, particularly in terms of why it is important for readers to understand how Bulgaria's dependence on Russian energy influences its foreign policy. While the thesis correctly identifies a gap in existing literature, it could more clearly articulate why this specific case study of Bulgaria is particularly crucial to understanding broader geopolitical dynamics. This explanation could also be an important aspect to address during your thesis defense.
- I found the purpose of Chapters 1 (Historical Overview) and 2 (Energy Data) somewhat unclear in their current form. While these chapters provide valuable information, they might seem disconnected from the empirical analysis. Consider integrating the historical overview into a more comprehensive literature review, which could also be expanded to systematically identify the gap in existing literature. If these chapters are intended to serve as part of the empirical argument, they should be positioned after the methodological section, where their relevance to the overarching thesis argument can be clearly explained.
- The inclusion of explicit hypotheses is a strong aspect of your thesis. While this may be an advanced expectation, if you intend to develop this thesis further, perhaps for publication, it would be advantageous to elaborate on the nature and reasoning behind your supporting evidence. The current thesis outlines the evidence, but the rationale behind it could be clearer. Additionally, consider addressing what would constitute contrary evidence,



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as this would further strengthen your argument and demonstrate a robust analytical approach.

- Your conclusion could benefit from more explicitly referencing the analysis conducted in the body of the thesis. Drawing clearer connections between your findings and the conclusion would enhance the overall coherence of your argument. This would also help in summarizing the key insights derived from your research, reinforcing the contributions of your study.

Minor criteria:

- In my opinion, there could have been a little bit more involvement with the literature, and this could have been done in a more systematic way, but overall it is not a big problem.

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:

Overall, this is a very good, and indeed, an excellent thesis. Your work demonstrates a high level of academic rigor and presents a valuable contribution to the field. The minor suggestions provided above are intended to help you refine your work further, particularly if you plan to develop it for future research or publication.

Suggested grade: A

Signature: