

Review

on the Master's Thesis submitted by 2nd year student of the St. Petersburg State University's Master's Program in International Relations Aleksandr Atamanov titled "Green' Factor in Finnish Public Diplomacy"

1. Evaluation of quality of dissertation

| No. | Criteria | Grades: • Excellent (5) • Good (4) • Satisfactory (3) • Unsatisfactory (2) ¹ | Comments |
|-----|---|---|--|
| 1. | Justification of research topic | 4 | The topic is relatively important and the researcher claims that there is a research gap. However, Atamanov's discussion of previous research in the field of public diplomacy and green branding could have been more extensive, i.e. the justification for the study mainly draws from policy-level considerations. |
| 2. | Academic novelty | 3 | Even though green branding has been studied in other contexts, there is a research gap in the studies of Finland's green branding. Discussion of previous research and use of primary data could have been more extensive and innovative. |
| 3. | Clarity in setting of objectives | 4 | Research questions are relevant. |
| 4. | Sufficiency and reliability of research material | 3 | Atamanov's main source of primary data consists of two websites used in Finland's public diplomacy and nation branding. In addition, there is one interview. Even though the number of articles used in qualitative analysis seems to be high, it is very difficult to find evidence that all these articles have actually been analysed qualitatively. The chapter 5 and conclusions should have been elaborated more. |
| 5. | Linking the research to literature in the field | 3 | The study lacks discussion on how Finland's attempts to green branding can be defined and evaluated in a broader context. See also 1. and 2. |
| 6. | Justification of selection of methods | 3 | A quantitative analysis of tags in the websites does not help in answering most of the research questions. This analysis mainly shows that Finland takes part in green branding. A qualitative analysis of articles and the interview is a good start for a more in-depth analysis. Having continued from this, and having conducted more interviews with representatives of the institutions mentioned in Theman's interview, could have helped to discuss Finland's green branding in a more comprehensive manner and to link this research with previous research in the field. |

¹ "Unsatisfactory" (failed) grade for one of the aspects automatically means that the dissertation does not meet requirements to Master's Thesis, that the author does not deserve the degree of Master of International Relations, and that recommended grade for the entire dissertation is "unsatisfactory". In case of "unsatisfactory" (failed) grade is recommended, the reviewer is expected to write extensive comments in the "comments" column and also in the "Conclusion / recommendation to state examination commission" section

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|---|--|-------|---|
| 7. | Answering the research question | 3 | See above. |
| 8. | Mastery of academic writing conventions | 4 | Atamanov writes good academic English, and has marked the references properly. There is some variation in the use of concepts (national branding vs. nation branding), some typos (Themán vs. Teman). In addition, in the list of primary sources there seems to be some sources that should have been listed in that of secondary sources. |
| Average grade (calculated as simple mean of grades in column 2): | | 3.375 | |

2. **Conclusion / recommendation to state examination commission: the dissertation meets (~~does not meet~~) requirements to Master's Theses; its author deserves (~~does not deserve~~) the degree of Master of International Relations.**

3. **Recommended grade: excellent / good / satisfactory / unsatisfactory – choose one**

Date 7 June 2017



**Signature of the Reviewer
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