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Review of Doctor dissertation written by Majid Asadnabizadeh titled *The Paris Climate Change Agreement: Analysis of International Decision-making*, ss. in the Department of International Relations under the supervision of prof. dr hab. Marek Pietraś

1. Assessment of the choice of dissertation issues and the importance of research

The reviewed doctoral dissertation of Mr Majid Asadnabizadeh prepared under the supervision of prof. dr hab. The Pietrasia is an interesting study of an interdisciplinary nature, dealing with the issues of the specificity of the international climate change regime from the perspective of the decision-making approach (IID) on the example of the Paris Agreement (hereinafter the Paris Agreement).

The Author uses an interesting approach to the issue from the perspective of the political system, specifically taking into account the decision-making system at the international level. This is a very original approach that is needed in the researching subject. The work is part of the area of political science research, on international relations, and more specifically research covering the analysis of the specificity of the decision-making process (the *case study*) in a difficult area requiring a consensus of international actors related to climate security in international relations. Considerations on the decision-making process based on Inter-state Integrated International Decision-making (IIID) approach undoubtedly have a scientific, cognitive, but also practical and educational value. This is confirmed by the following arguments:

Firstly, the paper adopts a defined time limit set by the beginning of negotiations, one of the most important agreements on climate change finally adopted in Paris in 2015, with a new instrument implemented from 2020. This decision would direct, control, and promote the next phase of climate action in Paris, therefore, was of crucial importance for international diplomacy and the specificity of the negotiations leading to the decision. One should agree with the Author (p. 8) that the Paris Agreement establishes “new ground in international climate policy, implementing the primacy of domestic climate change policy and enabling countries to set their degree of commitment to mitigate climate change”. However, the Author accordingly dates back to December 2009, when the UN international summit on Climate Change in

Copenhagen took place. Its importance in the concentration of the global political elite to initiate humanity's reaction to climate change decisions cannot be overestimated either. As the author states, "the conference was the most prominent summit in the history of international climate change decision-making" despite its final failure (p. 7).

Secondly, the theoretical and methodological approach adopted by the author to the subject undertaken: analyze the negotiation of the Paris Agreement as an example of an international decision on a particularly complex international problem such as climate change, using the categories of decision analysis such as decision-making situation, decision center, decision-making process, decision and decision implementation. This undoubtedly proves research maturity and openness to the application of new approaches to such important issues.

Importantly and worth noting and appreciating the author focused on the process of cognition and to establish a cognitive goal and understand a specific international climate change decision-making approach - Inter-state Integrated International Decision-making (Method) - for practical and valuable analysis of the Paris accord. The Author undertook an ambitious task - to analyze the negotiation of the Paris Agreement as an example of an international decision on a particularly complex international problem such as climate change, using the categories of decision analysis such as decision-making situation, decision center, decision -making process, decision and decision implementation. This has its justification, because the 1990s was a period when awareness of the dangers of climate change and the related social and economic transformations flourished.

Hence, this approach represents a dual role: is the sort of 'skeleton' of this research connected to the contents, moreover, every single chapter which has been divided based on logic of IIID as follows: situation, center, process, decision, and implementation to make this approach much more tangible. The Author outlined 5 categories with components to apply the IIID approach to the international climate change decision making.

Thirdly, the author applied in the doctoral dissertation a multidimensional problematic approach to the recently widespread problem of sustainable development, which is reflected in the concept of the European Green Deal, articulated, inter alia, in the six priorities of the European Commission for 2019-2024.

Fourth, the reviewed doctoral dissertation has to some extent an innovative dimension on the Polish and foreign scientific and publishing market, as it raises the issue of the applicability of the inter-state integrated international decision-making approach in the study of the negotiation process on the example of the Paris Agreement. There is no comprehensive approach to this issue. There are at most partial studies of a wide area of climate policy, the

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climate change regime (see: M. Pietraś, *Międzynarodowy reżim zmian klimatu/International climate change regime*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2011, p. 486) on the basis of both Polish and international individual countries, international organizations geographically, objectively or ideologically. The author, explaining the reasons for using the above approach, in the introduction to p. 9, notes that "compared to these studies, this approach is a new research tool initially developed by the researcher to understand the Paris Agreement (an example of global climate change governance) and the future process of international climate change decisions". And rightly adds that "the future implications of IIID would be considered based on actions and implementation process to address global climate change impacts".

Summarize this part of the assessment, the author's choice of the subject of the doctoral dissertation is appropriate, substantively and practically justified, as well as very up-to-date and justified in the context of filling the gap in the research on the approach to the difficult process of making political decisions at the international level, in this case the sensitive issue that was and there is still a climate agreement. On the one hand, it enriches the existing knowledge in the field of scientific analysis, and on the other hand, it has the value of utilitarianism for political practice.

2. Substantive assessment and methodological remarks

In terms of methodology, the author correctly defined the aim of the work and the subject of research. The main scientific goal of the reviewed dissertation is the analysis of the international decision which is the Paris Protocol and the process of its negotiation with the use of the category of decision analysis. The author is also aware that the complex problem of climate change is the subject of these negotiations.

The theoretical and methodological basis for researching political reality is the category of the decision-making system adopted by the PhD student, which is both an approach and a research structure to the argument carried out on the example of the intricate decision-making process of the Paris Agreement.

Author based on an understanding of the cognitive process considered the main research question as follows - how the Paris Agreement decision-making process within international climate change negotiations has been shaped, which needs to change in the future? Moreover, there are sub-questions as follow for every single chapter: How Decision-making Situation has been shaped, How Decision-making Center has been shaped, How Decision-making Process has been shaped, How Decision, and Implementation has shaped? (p. 8).

The methodological assumptions should be considered correct, because it adopted a hypothesis to be verified, and the research was carried out with the use of research methods appropriate primarily to the science of international relations. In terms of identifying research issues, the PhD student used the qualitative method to formulate research hypotheses and questions, process of examining the content of data performed in 4 forms: resource collection, descriptive analysis, specified categories, the structural dimensions to explain and interpret the results. Although these predominate, the issues and the approach to it require an interdisciplinary approach, as the Author emphasizes on p. 9. The author puts particular emphasis on the technique of qualitative research.

The author also used, although he did not mention it in the introduction, a *case study*, a comparative and interpretative method. The basic research technique used in the work is a critical analysis of various sources and literature. The PhD student illustrates his considerations and at the same time enriches them with a set of numerous charts and diagrams based on previously developed statistics and diagrams. He also includes charts of his own authorship, especially in terms of depicting the mechanism of the political decision-making system at the international level and the interaction of the elements of this system in a general sense, but also on the specific example of the Paris Agreement.

When assessing the work from the point of view of the political science and the science of international relations, the adopted methodology should be considered correct. The author actually adopted two research hypotheses. Firstly, the author claims that decision-makers have shaped the Paris Agreement decision-making process based on Inter-state Integrated International Decision-making (IIID). Secondly, the long-run Paris climate change agreement soon might apply necessary changes to avert the challenges international community is facing in the future negotiations of climate change. Treating these hypotheses as the main thesis, the PhD student also assumed the formulation of auxiliary theses and answer research questions.

Noteworthy is the critical approach and discussion of the approaches and theories presented so far concerning crucial international cooperation and decision-making, which the author refers to in his work, such as regime theory, collective actions in international regimes, cooperative approaches, and foreign policy theories, or the integrated assessment modeling of global climate change (Parson and Fisher-Vanden). Integrated assessment models seek to combine knowledge from multiple disciplines in formal integrated representations; inform policy-making, structure knowledge, prioritize key uncertainties; and advance knowledge of broad system linkages and feedback, particularly between socioeconomic and biophysical processes.



3. Use of literature

The main part of the work (content from introduction to conclusions) is contained in 224 pages of text. That's pretty average for a doctoral dissertation. The adopted arrangement of footnotes in the text is characteristic of the adopted methodology of foreign journals and publications. However, this does not make the dissertation easier to read. The numerous publications that the PhD student used when writing the work are 100% English-language items, even if they are authored by Polish researchers. The vast majority of these are various types of documents in their original form, available online, and not discussions or translations. The bibliographic items have been divided into documents, publications and websites. The list of bibliographies is 64 pages long (pp. 245-309).

The study compares the literature mentioned above and approaches that can assist evaluate IIID as an original robust approach. In their broad features, these approaches and IIID share some similarities. Most kinds of literature focus on either integration or collective actions between different variables in the process of decision making. The author, assessing the available literature on the subject, states that limited progress has been made on classifying climate change agreement- PA- into 5 categories according to its characteristics in an analytical manner.

Unfortunately, the quality of the constructed bibliography and footnotes raises some reservations. The author does not always care for the aesthetics and uniformity of the bibliographic entries. There are errors, words sticking together and illegible bibliographic notation (p. 292 - deviation from the written names of the authors of the works and the use of capital letters, i.e. HJERPE, M., & LINNÉR, B.). It could have been more taken care of.

A similar problem occurs with the use of a different font in a bibliographic record (in most Times New Roman 12, sometimes a different one (pp. 245, 257, 263, 264, 267, 281, 282), smaller fonts and underscores of web addresses - not everywhere). In literature, the titles of works are written in italics, the rest of entries without italics (p. 275), inconsistent use of quotation marks when noting the same types of bibliographic items ("The Presidents Climate Action Plan." Washington, p. 257). Wikipedia (HandWiki.org) is also used as a source database, which raises doubts.

The list of abbreviations and keywords was written on as many as 20 pages (pp. 224-244). The key to this list, adopted by the author, is not sufficiently clear, because it is definitely not an alphabetical criterion, and it should be. This list could have been condensed more into a smaller number of manuscript pages.

The PhD student made extensive use of international and European law documents contributing to the institutionalized world climate change regime. Mgr Asadnabizadeh also relied on documents of the United Nations, the European Union and unpublished materials that were valuable to the subject. Strongly embedded in the sources definitely deserves recognition due to the specificity of the topic of the dissertation. This proves the research credibility, originality and objectivity of the PhD student's approach and testifies to the research precision.

4. Doctoral dissertation structure

The structure of the work is correct, thematically and substantially separate parts of the argument. The dissertation consists of five chapters supplemented with a table of contents, introduction, ending, bibliography, and list of abbreviations. However, there was no list of tables, figures and charts. The topic of the chapters reflects the research subject of the dissertation, which is already visible when analyzing the table of contents.

The dissertation is based on a solid theoretical basis, it opens with two ontological chapters, constituting a superstructure that determines the method and, in a way, a 'skeleton' of analysis in individual parts of the work, but also as a research perspective. Due to their scientific and analytical value, these parts are indispensable in this dissertation. The first of them is entitled 'Analysis of Decision-making Situation (DMS-PA)' DMS-PA is an essential aspect of the primary approach in this research, namely IIID. It is a direct function of the IIID. DMS-PA has been entirely assessed by the researcher of this study based on the different points. To be more accurate, the Points such as environmental concern, perception of climate change, and PA steps were included and assessed.

In this part, the doctoral student, in accordance with the canon of writing scientific dissertations, analyzes the basic concepts such as the decision-making situation of the primary approach, namely IIID, the situation of decision-making, natural and anthropogenic causes of climate change. This is a kind of new approach to thinking about "climate change and pathways of climate change negotiations before final decision-making, which is the Paris agreement case in this context." Here, he also reviews the situation category that international decision-makers might use to address the combination of rudimentary issues and information that climate change presents. Applies the term situation to describe the underlying principles that provide the overall basis for other layers and decision-making steps. It also describes the natural conditions of climate change. This is where expertise is referred to, i.e., Milankovitch's hypothesis (pp. 22-23), describing the planet's climate change.

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Additionally, the author analyzes the problem of reaching a political consensus on climate change as a subject of debate not only by scientists and experts, but also by other entities, i.e. countries and international organizations (p. 32), especially the United Nations Organization, World Meteorological Organization, IPCC. They discuss issues such as the impact of climate change, predicted climate change, and future measures to mitigate climate change as one of the globe's most significant environmental issues today. The strategy and actions taken by these organizations, in addition to the basics and genesis of their creation, should also be updated with contemporary initiatives.

The wealth of concepts, conditions and the evolution of the decisions leading to the conclusion of the Paris Agreement in 2015, made on the basis of binding documents and world literature, have an almost encyclopedic dimension. It is a pity that sometimes they give the impression of dry-mentioned categories, concepts, facts, establishing dates or agreements without a more problematic and critical approach on the part of the Author. There is no broader discussion of the essence of the decision-making process in SM, except for a brief interpretation of this approach in the summary at the beginning of the work (p. 3), in the introduction (pp. 10-12), in subchapter 1.1. entitled '*The essence and structure of the analysis of the decision-making situation*' does so on only half of the page' (pp. 17-18).

To illustrate the scheme and stages of the decision-making process, he uses graphs that organize the notions. Drawings and graphics also appear in later chapters of the work, illustrating the phenomena discussed with different effects. Sometimes their form and message are quite unclear.

In the second chapter, titled '*Analysis of Decision-making Center (DMC)*' Paris Agreement plays a vital role in effective global climatic decisions. This part is a particularly valuable presentation of the research problem. The author reconstructs broad areas such as Essence and specificities, The Architects of the PA (Actors), Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), and it is dealing with Epistemic Communities This section reveals indicators developed to analyze DMC, Essence, and Specificity of DMC, Institutions of DMC-PA, The Architects of the DMC- PA, Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), and its deal with Epistemic Communities- are categorized in various ways.

For instance, Architects of P.A refers to objective indicators, such as Developed and Developing countries. This research section combines a descriptive and analytical account with evaluative statements about the DMC concerning theory. The critical evaluation of indicators by concept in this research section focuses on the following frameworks: (1) Regime theory (2) Epistemic communities. Factors and Indicators sit at the center of decision-making, and their

presence, absence, or prominence can significantly affect the behavior of IIID. Thus, I argue that for better and deep comprehension, we need to monitor this category and progress in meeting the objectives of the IIID through the analysis and use of well-defined indicators (pp. 51-52).

Mgr Asadnabizadeh undertook an interesting review of the existing definitions and approaches of representatives of science to the basic concept in the work of the decision-making process in international relations, referring to the interpretation of such authors as Snyder, Bruck, Sapin, Hudson, David Brulé (p. 53). Due to natural / linguistic reasons, Polish representatives from the science of international relations were absent, which is a great loss for work (eg Z.J. Pietraś, *Decydowanie polityczne/Political deciding*, PWN Publishing House, Warsaw-Krakow 1998).

The analysis of the center of the decision-making process is intertwined with the application of a scheme for the case of negotiations with PA is at the center of international climate change decisions because it is a combined long-term effort by considering long-term goals. In essence, PA commitments would cover more emission targets than KP, and contributions would be more concert than intentions declared by the 2009 international climate change negotiations. Regardless of specificity, states intended to take new climate actions under further international negotiation, known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). (p. 54).

The next, third chapter is a transition to the analysis of reaching a consensus on the issue of adopting the Paris Agreement through the prism of the next, third stage of the IIID approach, namely the Decision-making Process (DMP). At this stage of the IIID, it is essential to think and explore how the Paris climate change agreement has been shaped as an international decision to change international climate change negotiations. Based on DMP, this research proposes a framework for defining and analyzing the Paris Agreement's climate change process by critical pre-PA international talks. The range of political and economic stages will be considered (Figure.1). At the core of each step would be the political and economic dynamics of the decision created with sufficient precision to allow the researcher for analysis.

The second part of this study will be a systematic analysis of the implications of current political and economic stages for DMP-PA. That analysis would begin by identifying discrepancies between the political and economic backgrounds of the decision. It would proceed to a diagnosis of the reasons for the shaping of PA, economic backgrounds of the decision. It would proceed to a diagnosis of the reasons for the shaping of PA, accepting the possibility that both stages might not be on the same level. The analysis in this part would

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continue by providing better scientific information and calculation, including research summaries in the three single decision-relevant tables.

In each of these parts, the Author at the beginning of the chapter thoroughly explains its essence and applicability for the Paris Agreement. Here, a very meticulous and detailed case study, which is crucial for the whole work, has been made - cross-sectional approaches to six main phases of the decision-making process as issues identification and diagnosis, identification of possibilities, evaluation of alternatives, choice of option, implementation, and assessment (p. 96). At the same time, the various political stages of the decision-making process in the course of climate negotiations (from Durban through Warsaw to Lima) and the factors conditioning this process are shown (pp. 98-99, tab. 2, pp. 120-121).

The author relied on the differentiation of the discussed issue in terms of the stages of the decision-making process - dividing individual stages into several key phases of negotiations. The intention of the PhD student was to apply analogies and a uniform approach to the study of this phenomenon through the same *modus operandi* - through the prism of the decision-making process. This part exudes extensive factual, historical and problematic material.

The last two chapters are chapter IV entitled '*Analysis of the Paris Agreement as an international decision (DEC)*' and chapter V entitled '*Analysis of the Implementation of Paris agreement (IMP-PA)*' are a continuation of the next stage of the decision-making process. The author skillfully analyzes the 6-year negotiation process of the Paris agreement, treating it through the prism of as an international decision for climate change. According to him, "Paris agreement as a global decision by more than 196 states initiated to tackle climate change and its negative impacts (s. 141).

He rightly notes that "Unlike the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement does not formulate state-specific emissions targets. Instead, the Paris Agreement depends on voluntary mitigation contributions and a series of processes that seek to ensure collective and individual progress in meeting the initial and progressively more ambitious mitigation contributions". Therefore, when analyzing PA, it draws attention to the basic elements of the negotiation process through the prism of the IID approach. These include the key principles in the liberal international order (in this case, Principles of the Paris Agreement), Rules (Rules of the Paris Agreement), decision making based on these principles and rules. This is a necessary prelude to the implementation of a political decision at the last stage of the process.

Here he analyzes the essence and structure of international decisions with great attention to the already existing achievements. Despite the ambitious and promising approach to the problem, this chapter is too multi-threaded, sometimes it gives the impression of chaos and lack

of control over the proper topic. It was possible to organize these threads more clearly and to classify them more clearly.

Finally, the implementation stage of the decision is analyzed in a somewhat natural way, based on the example of the Paris Agreement. The same diagram of the chapter that starts with the essence and specificity of the process of implementing an international decision has been consistently applied here. The researcher will analyze the most pressing issues during the process of IMP and in the international climate change debates to find an appropriate response to how Pa and its implementation needs to be changed in the future. The author of the present study will look at the specific variables involved in the forthcoming sections differently. To put it simply, assessments in this chapter presented the main provisions of the PA Implementation (PA-IMP) related to the COP22 (7), COP23 (7), COP24 (5), COP25 (8). By using this discussion method, special attention would be paid to implementing the vital issues of the PA in the international climate change negotiations.

At the end of the dissertation, the Author refers to the problems and research questions posed in the introduction, especially those relating to the future and recommendations for necessary improvement (pp. 220-221). It confirms that the agreement established an integrated international system with a state role at the core to deal with the Paris agreement decision-making process. The role of states indicates that the aim is on having an Inter-state Integrated International process with necessary mechanisms means that each category (i.e. chapter) has multiple components or dimensions.

Detailed comments:

1. The language of the work is underdeveloped, incoherent in fragments, and the thoughts constructed by the author seem unfinished. For example, capital letters after the decimal point "*Simply put, Natural weather impacts*" (p. 19). The content of the work is broken and individual statements are not continuous, giving the impression of a "counting-out" (p. 19).
2. Uniform numbering of subsections and greater conceptual consistency in subsections and smaller parts of the chapter would be useful. Non-uniform font in the notation of subsections (sometimes in italics, sometimes without), e.g. 1.3.2. *Industrialization*) (p. 27).
3. The presented data is sometimes outdated - the example of the share of fossil fuels in environmental pollution is cited at the latest from 2016. More recent data could be provided, at least from 2020/2021 (p. 31) The work was completed in 2022.

4. Figures and charts used in the work are often illegible (p. 184), they give the impression of being pasted from a different format. Instead of putting things in order, they introduce more chaos.

5. The form of the work is underdeveloped, sometimes it is difficult to separate individual parts, sometimes words stick together. The principle of a separate page for each part of the work (introduction, chapters, ending) was not followed. Unfortunately, the text blends together in some cases.

6. There are occasional linguistic mistakes, lack of attention to the consistent writing of some abbreviations and words. This provision should be consistent. It would have made it more linguistic. It seems that the table of contents should, however, use a uniform terminology, especially the same key terms, and not their abbreviated version (such as the table of contents point 2.1.1. '*Understanding DM in International Relations*').

7. At the end of the hearing, there was no list of figures, tables and charts, although they were numerous in each part, including the ending.

Final conclusions:

In conclusion, it should be considered that the choice of topic is appropriate for a doctoral dissertation. Majida Asadnabizadeha, MA, analyzes the issue in a competent manner. The doctoral student's evidence is scientifically interesting. The approach used is original and comprehensive to achieve the goals set.

Despite critical remarks, this dissertation proves that the PhD student is well prepared for research independence work. In addition, it is based on a wide set of documents and literature on the subject, which the doctoral student correctly used in his research.

Appreciating the scientific effort of the PhD student and the quality of the considerations contained in this dissertation, corresponding to the requirements of the doctoral dissertation, **I state that the reviewed dissertation of Mr. Majid Asadnabizadeh meets the requirements for doctoral dissertations, therefore I request that Mr. Majid Asadnabizadeh be admitted to further stages of the doctoral dissertation.**



Lublin, May 26, 2022