



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Sabina Nováková

Title: Central Asian Foreign Fighters in Syria

Study program: Security Studies

Programme/year: 2018

Author of Evaluation (thesis supervisor): prof. Oldřich Bureš

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	7
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	12
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	20
<i>Total</i>		80	39
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	7
	Style	5	4
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	16
TOTAL		100	55



Evaluation

Major criteria:

At the beginning of my review, I have to declare that this thesis was submitted without my approval. Albeit I am formally listed as a supervisor and I discussed with Mrs. Novakova my expectations regarding the time-line of the thesis' preparation, consultations and submission for my feedback, none of these were met – I received the thesis in late July, one week before it was submitted.

This is even more disappointing due to the fact that Mrs. Novakova received a GAUK research grant for writing this thesis, which I unfortunately also agreed to formally supervise and which she failed to complete in time and with the promised outputs, without even informing me. Such an attitude is at the very least extremely unprofessional.

Regarding the thesis itself, it explores a relatively understudied topic of Central Asian foreign fighters. The author has reviewed a substantial amount of news sources, especially when it comes to the Central Asian states' measures against foreign fighters. Using funding from GAUK, she also traveled to Central Asia to conduct interviews, but there is no information in the thesis regarding either the format of these interviews, or the basic information about the respondents – how many, what background, from which countries etc. It is therefore not clear whether any interviews have actually been conducted and what information, if any, was derived from them.

Due to the lack of consultations and contrary to my initial suggestions, the thesis lacks any theoretical or conceptual framework, albeit there are numerous models/concepts of radicalization in the academic literature. The brief “theoretical” chapter offers only definitions/terminology. As a consequence, the empirical chapters read more like a police report, listing information from various sources without much value-added/analysis. In chapter 3, the author arbitrarily selects just four categories/factors of radicalization, while in chapter 4, she highlights different factors, such as the role of recruiters.

There is also no discussion regarding the research methods and research design. As a consequence, in chapters 3 and 4, the thesis treats all foreign fighters from Central Asia as one case study, which in chapter 5, the four countries' countermeasures are analyzed separately. It is not clear, whether the thesis attempts to offer a comparative analysis or a single case study of the entire Central Asian region.



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Minor criteria: No major issues except for missing sources on models/conceptualizations of de-/radicalization.

Overall evaluation: Overall, I still recommend this thesis for defense with the lowest possible passing grade, primarily due the valuable empirical input in chapter 5.

Suggested grade: 3

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'B. M.' or similar, written in a cursive style.