



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Karolina Karásková

Title: Child Soldiers: Recruitment and Abuse of Children in Armed Conflicts

Programme/year: International Relations/2019

Author of Evaluation (external assessor): PhDr. Zdeněk Ludvík, Ph.D.

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	8
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	26
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	29
Total		80	63
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	8
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
Total		20	18
TOTAL		100	81



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The author chose a topic that is not too innovative as it has long enjoyed a researchers' interest. The resulting text is in its entirety logically and clearly structured, the consistency and coherence of the theoretical and empirical parts is at an appropriate level. The author uses a wide range of relevant sources for her work though she draws only on documents and reports from governmental and non-governmental organizations, but this is related to her research approach.

I have only two major comments on the paper.

First, the author uses the purely international legal perspective of the point of view of the phenomenon of recruiting/abusing children by non-state armed groups (NSAGs). Such an approach to the subject matter is a legitimate choice but in a situation where NSAGs generally ignore international-social behavioral standards, including those that are materialized in international law, testing the effectiveness of the impact of norms of international law on NSAGs practices is somewhat pointless. This is because if there is ever a selflimitation of NSAGs violence, the cause of this selflimitation is not provoked by the norms of international law (is provoked by coercion, bargaining or socialization, or a combination of these factors). Thus, *the further development of the international humanitarian law over time* (p. 72) will have a negligible impact on the violent nature of NSAGs. The change of the content of NSAGs behavioral codes lies outside the domain of international law, unfortunately. It is a pity that the author has completely ignored this fact, including the academic reflection of the studied problem, on top of that, when there is so rich literature on this issue.

Secondly, methodology specification is the greatest weakness of the paper. The used methodology certainly does not represent an instrumental case study, as the author states. Not only does it not serve either for theory testing or theory building, it also does not check for variations of variables/define necessary and sufficient conditions for outcomes. In addition, the instrumentality of the case study does not correspond to the author's research plan, i.e. to point out *uniqueness of each case* (p. 7). In other words, it cannot be an instrumental case study when it is used by no means for work with theory. In fact, the case study is just a framework for describing the case as such. Thus, the methodological chapter (pp. 11–14) gives impression of a compulsory component of the paper and, at the same time, is incorrectly



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formulated. If the author had explicitly claimed allegiance to an intrinsic conception of case study, she would have done better.

Minor criteria:

Paper meets the formal requirements and style of a diploma thesis.

Overall evaluation:

Despite partial objections the paper brings a refreshing text and corroborates the author's proficiency. Paper meets the requirements of a diploma thesis. I recommend it for defense.

Suggested grade:

B (very good: above average performance, but with some errors)

Signature:

Zd. Ludvík, m.p.