



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Selynn Yan Ting Lim

Title: Indonesia: Hotbed for Terrorist Activities?

Programme/year: International Security Studies /2019

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/external assessor): Aleš Karmazin

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	6
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	13
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	18
<i>Total</i>		80	37
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	8
	Style	5	3
	Formal requirements	5	4
<i>Total</i>		20	15
TOTAL		100	52



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The thesis deals with a highly pressing issue of terrorism and political violence in Indonesia and can be regarded to be very relevant. It is able to (partly) explicate political dynamics related to some conflicts and tensions which are discussed in the thesis. However, it unfortunately suffers from some major weaknesses when it comes to the definition of the main goal, the use of theory, the analytical and methodological approach. The fundamental problem is a very high level of unclarity concerning all these areas. Results seem too general and relatively weak, which might be caused by the author's confusing introduction of the central theory/concept and the analytical approach rather than by the author's inability to conduct an empirical analysis.

As regards the theoretical background, it would be appropriate to explain why the author decided to choose "relative deprivation" as the central concept/theory (the author sometimes talks about relative deprivation as a theory and sometimes about a concept of relative deprivation). However, it is even more unfortunate that the author does not really introduce the theory and does not specify how she understands it. What does the theory/concept states, which factors (variables) and how it uses, what can be expected on the basis of the theory/concept? Although relative deprivation is partly introduced later on in the literature review chapter (chapter 3), clear conceptualization and operationalization are missing anyway. When the author adds social media and political entrepreneurs as new variables that should be examined, she doesn't explicate very well why she does so and how she connects them with relative deprivation.

The author claims to conduct critical discourse analysis (CDA). I am puzzled if it is an appropriate method for analysing relative deprivation. It is also unclear what would be meant to be analysed – socio-psychological profiles of key actors, identities, grievances, ways of mobilization? While the author uses some direct quotations, she does not conduct any type of discourse analysis, not to speak of CDA which is perhaps the most demanding type of discourse analysis. CDA should by no means rely on google-translated texts (which would be more acceptable in cases of different methods of textual analysis).



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The author's reasoning behind the case selection is not entirely convincing either. All the three cases are of a different character (one-off terrorist bombings, a political rally, a conflict spanning over four years).

The structure largely contributes to my overall confusion about the thesis.

Chapter 2, in which methodology is introduced, also deals with two out of three cases that are examined in the thesis. The third case is introduced in the last part of chapter 4. The case studies are not very persuasive and explicit about demonstrating the role of relative deprivation in given cases (what are key indicators that are supposed to reveal the presence of relative deprivation?). While other factors (social media, political entrepreneurs, personal motivations) are partly mentioned, the analyses lack a clearly structured focus/approach. Moreover, the case studies are relatively short compared to the rest of the thesis (they stand for about 15 pages in total which include discussion of a broader context; the total length is 52 pages). Especially the Maluku Islands case does not inform us very well about actual conflict dynamics.

In chapter 5 and 6, the author returns to the issue of political entrepreneurs and social media which were partly discussed before. In chapter 5, the role of political entrepreneurs is analysed but rather superficially. The chapter does not really show how exactly political entrepreneurs influenced the discussed cases and how they contributed to political mobilisation. It is limited to relatively general observations, i.e. that there are some Muslim leaders who are extremist and hence contribute to conflicts/tensions. The analysis of social media in chapter 6 evinces similar weaknesses. Chapter 7 on counter-terrorism seems rather redundant (what is the purpose of the chapter?).

Minor criteria:

At many points, the work is composed of very long paragraphs which make the thesis difficult to read. It contributes to the unclarity of the thesis. For example, chapter 6 is written as one paragraph (pp. 45-47).



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Overall evaluation:

As noted above, the fundamental problem of the thesis is its overall unclarity when it comes to precise goals, the way how it uses theory, methodological and analytical design but also structure. These issues, then, very negatively impact even on empirical analysis.

I suggest that the thesis should be defended and passed. However, the author should carefully explain her goal, her understanding of the central concept, her actual analytical procedure and key conclusions. When addressing the latter, I suggest she should focus on the results of her analysis which go beyond general statements.

Suggested grade: E

Signature: