



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Ludmila Lešková

Title: Development Aid and the Need for Exit Strategies: Case of the Czech Republic and Serbia

Programme/year: Security Studies / 2019

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/external assessor): Tomáš Bruner

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	7
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	26
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	33
<i>Total</i>		80	66
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	8
	Style	5	3
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	16
TOTAL		100	82



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The author carefully chose **the topic** (importance of an exit strategy for development aid programmes) as well as the Serbian case. This choice is precisely justified and demonstrates deep understanding of the issue. The author identified a gap in Czech literature and more importantly in actual practice concerning exit strategy, which is a great contribution.

The author employed adequate **method** (single case study with several referential cases). I highly appreciate thorough hard work with primary **resources** (document analysis, interviews, and observations) as well as author's detailed knowledge of her case.

The **theoretical** and **conceptual** underpinning of the thesis is also rather strong. Chapter 2 offers historical overview concerning foreign development aid, but also theoretical reflections from realists', liberal or dependency/World Theory perspective. Although I believe there are further authors who theorized about development aid and could contribute to the theoretical debate (Chandler, Duffield etc.), the overview provided by the thesis is still robust. Given the fact that the author distinguishes various theoretical reflections concerning development aid, I would like to ask her the following questions:

Which general theoretical position concerning the foreign aid do you assume in the thesis (e.g. liberal / realist's / some other)? Why and how could this be important for assessing the importance of exit strategy?

The clarity of **argumentation** could be slightly improved to avoid ambiguity. Three research questions are well structured, but once asked, it is not in my opinion necessary to have a hypothesis at the same time. In other words, the research could be better without the hypothesis. The hypothesis is slightly problematic in several aspects. Firstly, it does not cover the third research question.

Secondly, its relation to the title and general argument of the thesis could be more explained. The title of the thesis emphasizes the need for exit strategy. The exit strategy should be also expected and desirable according to international informal standards (cf. page 14: *whether if compared to the international debate of the exit issue, the Czech development cooperation is in line with the current trends and debates*). Nonetheless, the hypothesis states: *The Czech development cooperation had no clear exit strategy from partner countries in the period of 2010 - 2018, but they managed their exit procedure successfully*. Given the wording of the hypothesis: Why would be the exit strategy needed, if exit could be successfully managed without it?

Thirdly, the hypothesis should be derived from or at least related to theoretical or conceptual assumptions. The current one is entirely empirical.



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Fourthly and finally, the hypothesis is actually divided into two parts:

H1: *The Czech development cooperation had no clear exit strategy from partner countries in the period of 2010 – 2018*

H2: *They managed their exit procedure successfully*

The author concludes (p. 64) that in regard to H1, there was an exit process, but not a comprehensive strategy and especially no formal recorded evaluation. In regard to H2, the author perhaps suggests that due to finding related to H1, we cannot confirm the validity of H2 at all. Exit strategy including evaluation would be therefore vital to measuring the success.

Minor criteria:

The thesis is well written, in crisp style and proper academic language. There are occasional typos (e.g. commas before *that*). I missed footnotes, either to explain frequent abbreviations/acronyms (OECD DAC, DFID etc.) to the reader or to provide additional comments and clarifications.

Part 2.2 could be migrated to chapter 3, because it already deals with the specific Czech case, not with general theoretical assumptions. Moreover, it could have been shorter, because it describes certain tools not directly related to exit strategies.

Overall evaluation:

I recommend the thesis for defence.

Suggested grade:

1 – 2 (excellent or very good), depending on the persuasiveness of thesis defence.

Signature: