



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Saadet Ertürk

Title: The Rise of China and its Implications for Western Development Cooperation Policy

Programme/year: Master in International Relations

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/external assessor): external assessor – Jan Karlas

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	25
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	38
<i>Total</i>		80	73
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	20
TOTAL		100	93



Evaluation

Major criteria:

This M.A. thesis deals with the reactions of the traditional Western donors to the increasing aid provided alternatively by China to the Sub-Saharan Africa. It seeks to detect whether the Chinese aid changes the patterns of aid provision by the traditional donors.

The second chapter provides a literature review. The review offers a useful insight into the factors that have determined the provision of the aid in the past, as well as on the potential consequences of the aid. It also nicely outlines the literature on the new donors.

The theoretical framework is set up in the third chapter. It consists mainly of two theories – regime complexes and contested multilateralism. I suppose that the selected theories are relevant for anchoring the research questions. Still, I have a couple of critical comments on the theoretical background of the thesis:

1) It seems to me that we can talk about a regime complex only when the individual parts of the complex have something in common, even though only in a very limited sense. If they do not share anything in common, they probably constitute separate regimes rather than regimes nested in one complex. Following the author's description, it might appear that the traditional DAC regime and the new regime promoted by China are highly separated from each other. Hence, I wonder whether we can really talk nowadays about the regime complex for developmental aid subsuming both of the components, or if these are rather two separate regimes (and an overarching complex is then to a high extent non-existing).

2) What I see to be a weaker part of the thesis is that it does not clearly explain why the traditional donors should try to balance the Chinese aid. This can be explained by the fact that the two selected frameworks have not much to say about this – they are better at explaining why China has established the alternative regime. It would be useful if the thesis explicitly stated why the traditional donors should be motivated to react to the Chinese aid – because they lose bargaining power (this is somewhat suggested by the thesis, but not developed further), they want to contain the expanding Chinese power, they want to maintain the link between the aid and conditionality, they want to defend their DAC regime, etc. I guess that the fact that the empirical results largely do not show that the traditional donors are reacting to China only increases the need to explain why we should expect them to do so.



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The fourth chapter outlines the research design. The thesis uses relevant data, as well as a suitable quantitative methodology. All variables are clearly specified, including the relevant control variables. In the discussion of fixed effects on p. 44, I miss clear information on the units of observations to which the fixed effects will be related. I also struggled a bit with what are the observations on the dependent variable. At one point, the thesis talks about the data being in the provider-recipient-year format. But the regressions have only 349 observations, so the data probably entered them in the recipient-year format (if I understand it correctly).

Minor criteria:

No comments

Overall evaluation:

Overall, the thesis is a very good and well-done piece of work. It is both theoretically and methodologically grounded in a meaningful way. I appreciate the identification of the problem and the connection between the problem and the theories. The methodological work is very good for the M.A. level. The author could explain better the motivation of the traditional donors to react to the Chinese behavior (it is more assumed than explained). Also, it would be fine to discuss more openly whether there is one regime complex with two fundamental parts in the making, or rather two separate, conflicting regimes.

Suggested grade:

A

Signature: