



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Gabriel van Oppen Ardanaz

Title: Going green: MINUSMA and the United Nation's turn to Counter-terrorism and Counter-insurgency

Programme/year: Master International 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	15
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	31
<i>Total</i>		80	53
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	8
	Style	5	4
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	17
TOTAL		100	70



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The thesis intends to demonstrate that the UN peacekeeping is in the middle of adaptation process. It adapts to new types of intra-state asymmetric conflicts. Peacekeepers must engage intensively in intelligence gathering and country stabilization, they are using COIN and CT strategies. Thus, peacekeeping is abandoning “holy trinity” of its classical principles. It is being militarized – “going green”. The thesis illustrates this on case of MINUSMA as “the clearest example of the new shift of peacekeeping operations” (p. 13). It claims that the militarization of MINUSMA was driven by character of conflict and inspired by the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I highly appreciate author’s deep knowledge of MINUSMA history and ability to explain its context. The thesis contains nice, tabularized comparisons concerning MINUSMA (e.g. troops contributors, similarities with USAF and MNF-I etc.). Moreover, there is well-prepared section on general peacekeeping development. Author’s hard work is clearly visible here.

Nonetheless, I missed **theoretical underpinning** of the research or at least basic conceptualisation and consequent operationalization. The author could have chosen from plethora of possibilities: theories dealing with (institutional) learning, adaptation and replicative behaviour; theories drawing generalizations on peacekeeping; COIN and CT doctrines; or concepts such as hybrid warfare. If the author was unwilling to engage with an *a priori* given theory/concept, he could still have opted for grounded theory. I respect that the author might have prioritized empirical enquiry. However, he should still justify, *why he was entirely unwilling to theorize*.

The absence of any theoretical underpinning necessarily impacted on author’s **methodology**. The author declares to use process-tracing. However, he admits (p. 16) that it is neither theory-building nor theory testing, because “they don’t appear to be useful for the type of investigation my study requires”. The author should explain *why those approaches are not useful*. Is it because there is no theory to build or test? Without proper operationalization, the thesis just identifies “possible linkages that can explain why and how MINUSMA has adapted to the Malian security context” (ibid.). This is not proper process tracing, but rather simple descriptive comparison of MINUSMA with other missions (cf. p. 54; p. 64).



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The thesis asks two **research questions**: “1). Why has MINUSMA been forced to go green, and; 2). How it is doing so.” The questions themselves are unproblematic and well formulated. But I am afraid that they do not fit the general argument of the thesis. According to the thesis, MINUSMA proves that the UN peacekeeping is in the middle of changes. The questions ask why and how MINUSMA goes green. The answer gets us back to the original presupposition: because UN peacekeeping is in the middle of changes. Thus, the answer is already expected, although not being presented/verified in a form of a hypothesis. The thesis rather describes the situation (although in a detailed and solid way) then bring new perspectives or insights.

Minor criteria:

The thesis is pleasant and interesting to read and written in a crisp style, although the author sometimes resorts to non-academic, informal language and there are occasional typos.

The thesis does not rely heavily on secondary sources; the author often presents longer descriptions of situation without referring to particular source (e.g. page 43)– *I suppose those are author’s own observations?*

The literature review sometimes mixes primary and secondary sources. The thesis contains various longer parts of the text without explaining their relevance for the research.

Overall evaluation:

The thesis is interesting. It contains good and thoroughly conducted empirical investigation. Though, it is rather descriptive than analytical.

Suggested grade:

2 – 3 depending on author’s rebuttal to the points above, esp. those in *Italic*

Signature:

Tomáš Bruner