



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Bc. Jakub Štekl

Title: Demise and Disintegration of Nationalist Terrorist Groups

Programme/year: BS 2020

Author of Evaluation (external assessor): Markéta Kocmanová

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	5
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	30
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	26
<i>Total</i>		80	61
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	3
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	18
TOTAL		100	79



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The Master's thesis presents the topic of the demise, disintegration, and transformation of nationalist terrorist groups with the aim to demonstrate how the violent campaigns of IRA and ETA came to an end. The selected theoretical framework utilizing instrumental and organizational approaches is ideally suited to explain the immensely complex group processes at play when terrorism ceases to exist, especially in its nationalist form. It is this carefully selected and devised theoretical background that represents the core strength of the text enabling the author to gain a very solid footing for his analysis and offering him ample opportunity for a comprehensive qualitative analysis of which he, unfortunately, did not take full advantage.

The fundamental problem stems from the way the research questions are formulated and consequently addressed in the case-study concluding parts and in the final conclusion itself. Specifically, RQ1 "Which factors appear to be the most essential for a national terrorist organization to enhance its survival?" works with a wrong wording – in my view, instead of 'enhance' the author should have used 'influence' as he, after all, correctly writes in Chapter 3.3. If the author aimed at searching for empirical evidence of factors enhancing (i.e. boosting) the terrorist groups' survival, in his findings he would essentially go against the dynamic direction he intended to explore, *id est* to identify the factors contributing to the demise of terrorist movements. Thus, this research questions represents a sort of *contradictio in adjecto* which is not and cannot be satisfactorily answered. Furthermore, even the RQ3 "Under which circumstances is a transformation of a terrorist group to a political party acceptable by the ruling authority?" suffers from minor inaccuracy and fails to be adequately responded to the way it is phrased.

On the whole, the author managed to gather a significant amount of academically relevant empirical evidence enabling him to answer his research questions (taking the objections raised above into consideration), yet he did not do so persuasively and clearly. Given the robustness of his empirics, he could have performed a more in-depth and accurate analysis than just a rather general, though correct and valid, conclusion summarizing his findings by answering a question "So how do nationalist terrorist campaigns end?"



**FACULTY
OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**
Charles University

Regrettably, this is a missed opportunity to contribute to a more detailed understanding of how the nationalist strand of terrorist groups ends (although potential generalizability would be limited) and what lessons can be learned as for potential counterterrorism recommendations the author promised to provide in his thesis project.

Minor criteria:

The thesis is logically coherent and supported by a wealth of good quality sources that prove relevant for the scope and focus of the text. Overall, the text reads well but in parts it suffers from lack of proper proofreading – this concerns typos, punctuation, minor grammar problems and textual inconsistencies, plus the references in the list of literature use the Czech ‘a’ instead of the English ‘and’ in co-authored works.

Overall evaluation:

In sum, Jakub’s work unambiguously meets the criteria for a Master’s thesis and deserves to be defended even though it has its distinct strengths and weaknesses. The principal asset of this thesis is its effective theoretical framework that enables the author to firmly anchor his two-case study in a very solid conceptual grounding complemented with a sufficiently robust empirical base. However, the somewhat flimsy formulation of the research questions prevents the author from arriving at clear, persuasive and sufficiently ample conclusions that would more accurately summarize the factors and processes resulting in the demise, disintegration, and transformation of the IRA and ETA terrorist groups.

Suggested grade:

C

Signature:

Markéta Kocmanová