



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Michael Kraft

Title: *Preconditions of Democracy: How Forced Democratization Depends on Transformation and State-building Characteristics*

Programme/year: ISSA 2020

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Dr. George Hays II

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	4
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	19
TOTAL		100	92



Evaluation

Major criteria: see below

Minor criteria: see below

Overall evaluation:

The author seeks to answer the question “What is the relationship between military interventions aimed at democratization, preconditions comprising country characteristics and missions’ surroundings and successful democratization?” (5). To examine the issue, the author expands on the literature of transition and state-building by focusing on “forced democratization efforts” (5). Running a qualitative comparative analysis for 27 such efforts ranging from 1943 to 2008, the author concludes that the relevant variables in the existing literature for internally sparked democratization are also relevant to externally forced democratization. This means that any external intervention with an eye towards democratization should take a close look at the democratization variables already on the ground, as success will not be determined by strength of arms alone.

There is a strong logical flow to the author’s work that is quite pleasing. A section that particularly stands out is in the Theory chapter where the author is wrapping up defining Military Democratic Interventions. The author discusses the literature and different definitions, all taking for granted the concept of “democracy.” It is right at this moment when the problem of the undefined concept is greatest that the author transitions to the next section, defining democracy, and acknowledging the tension that had been building: “Furthermore, it is important to define the term of democracy because without knowing what is aimed to influence by the intervention one cannot say anything about the effect of it. For the term democracy as much as for the concept of intervention holds true that there are minimalistic ways of defining it as well as holistic approaches” (23). It was an enjoyable bit of writing.

The author has a very impressive and extensive literature review. It is one of the great strengths of the work. He goes in depth on multiple components of his argument, delving into nuance and the strengths and weaknesses of the reviewed arguments and concepts. There is a related downside to this, though. While the literature review is extensive, it spills over and continues in what should be a development of theory. The author does well in clarifying terms (as discussed above), but there really is no clear theoretical framework to guide the argument. Rather, the author focuses on methodology and previous literature.

The author works well with the methodology employed. The analysis sections are clear, and the discussion is impressive and balanced. The author’s conclusions are well supported and explained. Indeed, the crucial analysis sections are perhaps the best written and well-presented sections of the work. The thoroughness of the analysis sections, though, highlights the rather confusing nature of parts of the previous sections and chapters. For example, on pages 5-6 the author introduces the variables for his work. This introductory discussion is rather impenetrable, though, as clusters and single variables are



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mixed together without ever being explicitly presented. This can be found in the framework sections as well, where the clarity of explicitly stating “theoretical concepts x, y, and z are analyzed utilizing variables m, n, o, p, and q.” It is obvious from the analysis that the author knew what he was doing and took great care in doing it. It seems like the chapters and sections to lead the reader to that point were written afterwards without appreciating the fact that the reader needs the author’s explicit clarity at the beginning of the work even more to make sense of the analysis later on.

While there are some technical issues in the presentation/writing that make getting into the argument more difficult than is needed, the argument itself in the second half of the work is very strong and presented quite well. The author clearly demonstrates his ability to engage with the literature, the method, and the data. The work is impressive, and I recommend that it be given a lower A.

A few questions:

1. Is it not inherently anti-democratic to have an externally forced regime change, even if it is towards democracy?
2. While the studied cases run from 1943-2008, there are only two cases from during the Cold War era. Does this not suggest a criterion for MDI that necessitates a clear global hegemon?

Suggested grade: Lower A

Signature

George Hays II