



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Beatrice Maria Luna Ippoliti

Title: Economic Policies and Rebel Choices: A Comparative Perspective on Libya, Syria, and Yemen

Programme/year: ISSA

Author of Evaluation (~~supervisor~~/external assessor): Mgr. Martin Laryš

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	8
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	27
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	33
<i>Total</i>		80	68
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	3
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	18
TOTAL		100	86



Evaluation

Major criteria:

I understand the main idea of this diploma thesis as an attempt to prove that local elites in the civil wars may legitimize rebel governance and prefer that rebel governance as an alternative to the official government. The author claims that the key to legitimization is the government's economic policy in terms of allocating resources to the local elites. To put it simply, the thesis promises to discuss whether the local elites have access to the resources distributed by the governance or not.

The argument is that if the local elites have access to the resources, they will probably support the government, and if they don't, they may see the rebels as a reasonable alternative. In the latter case, the local elites support the rebel governance, which grants the rebel a certain level of legitimacy.

The author's implicitly rationalist argument about the local elites' preferences in the civil wars is original and innovative. I like the thesis' main idea. However, the work suffers several setbacks in the theoretical and methodological aspects.

When it comes to methodology, the author notes that she analyses causal links between government economic policies and rebels' legitimacy, but in the text, I can see no observation of within-case causality that could explain these causal links (What is the cause? What is the outcome? What drives X to Y?).

There is a lot of empirical data, but the author does not explain who the local elites are in the analyzed civil wars, neither in theoretical nor in the empirical part of the thesis. She gives them "right" to grant legitimacy to the rebel groups. It means the local elites are the key actors on the ground, but the author but says nothing about who these local elites are, what are their political and economic preferences, or anything else that would explain their role in the rebellions. In many cases, the local elites do not have agency for granting the legitimacy but are forced to do as the rebels tell them because they have the power and resources to coerce the local elites to serve their interests. Granting legitimacy is not always voluntary.



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Minor criteria:

Sometimes it is hard to follow the text. I had to read some parts of the work several times, first to guess and then (hopefully) understand the author's idea or intention.

Overall evaluation:

Despite the shortcomings mentioned above, this diploma thesis is a high-quality work whose main argument is promising for future research once the theoretical and methodological structures are improved.

Suggested grade: 1

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a long horizontal stroke.