



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: International Security Studies, 2021

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Tomáš Karásek

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	8
	Theoretical / conceptual framework	30	28
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	35
<i>Total</i>		80	71
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	4
	Formal requirements	5	4
<i>Total</i>		20	18
TOTAL		100	89



Evaluation

Major criteria:

This is by all accounts an innovative and creative dissertation, which analyzes a well-known and widely commented-upon phenomenon (the Arab Spring) from a novel perspective. Dissecting three major conflicts into which the reform effort in the Arab world ultimately degenerated, the author asks to what extent economic policies of a state impact rebels' legitimacy. Utilizing Bueno de Mosquita's conceptualization of Selectorate and Winning Coalition, the dissertation presents three specific hypothesis which it subsequently tests in the form of a comparative case study.

The author must be lauded both for developing the research design and implementing it. The construction of the three hypotheses documents the author's conceptual acumen, which the ensuing empirical analysis nicely complements. The result is a rich, complex but rigorous and disciplined account of three major cases, with clearly formulated conclusions.

Having said that, I miss in the conceptual foundations and the dissertation's methodology an important element – possible role of intervening variables. While the author vividly evokes and documents the relationship between the states' economic policies and the rebels' legitimacy, a crucial question remains unanswered: could other (i.e. non-economic) factors have affected the outcomes? Short of at least asking and grappling with this question, it is difficult to claim that the alleged causality is in fact more than correlation.

Minor criteria:

The author put together an admirable list of sources which are referred to throughout the dissertation – it is a pity, though, that the referencing format is inconsistent throughout the text. The language of the dissertation is solid, conforming to the requirements of an academic text.

Overall evaluation:

This is a well-conceived, rigorously structured dissertation with great analytical insight into a highly relevant topic from a novel conceptual angle. The only problematic aspect is the alleged causality between elements of the hypotheses, not taking into account possible impact of intervening variables.



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Suggested grade: **B**

Signature: