



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: AMERIGO PIUNTI

Title: Analysis of ISIS Insurgency through the theory of Revolutionary Warfare

Programme/year: MISS, 2021

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): EMIL ASLAN

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	7
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	25
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	33
<i>Total</i>		80	65
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	9
	Style	5	3
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	17
TOTAL		100	82



Evaluation

Major criteria:

While I appreciate a certain originality of the thesis, I have to admit that its design and argument are somewhat blurred. It's not entirely clear what the main objective of the thesis is: to show that Mao's theory can be applied to the Daesh case? Or to apply it to the Daesh case? Or to show that the Daesh insurgency in Syria and Iraq evolved in accordance with Mao's theory? An explicit RQ bridging together all parts of the thesis is missing (I couldn't identify it); yet the exact RQ might necessitate a different RD and require a different empirical analysis, among other things. Owing to this deficiency, the thesis' structure suffers from lack of clarity/focus and certain superficiality, for example, when extending the thesis' findings to the extra case of Boko Haram (in the conclusion section).

The author also makes several contrafactual claims that are (a) difficult to prove empirically and are (b) unrelated to the main objective of the thesis. It would also been helpful for the author to be more explicit about his own claims and claims made by other authors to streamline what the actual contribution of the thesis is.

This having said, I still consider the thesis an interesting piece of research. I praise the author's analytical skills and, not least, his willingness to take the risk in working out an innovative topic – and, more specifically, to apply a classic concept (unrelated to jihadi insurgency) to jihadi insurgency. I also like the phrasing of Mao's concept – it illustrates what the author seeks to prove empirically. While sceptics might claim that nearly all insurgencies follow what has come to be known as Maoist theory, the author still makes an interesting (though unbrushed) claim which should be appreciated.

Minor criteria:

See above.



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Overall evaluation: An interesting piece of research that could use an extra month to finalize in terms of the focus and main argument.

Suggested grade: B

Signature: