



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Matěj Denk

Title: Breaking Free from the Dominance and Establishing Independent Policy: The Analysis of Saudi-Qatari Relations and its Implications on the Region of the Persian Gulf

Programme/year: 2021

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Jan Daniel

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	9
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	25
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	27
<i>Total</i>		80	61
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	9
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	4
<i>Total</i>		20	18
TOTAL		100	79



Evaluation

Major criteria:

This is a well-thought piece of research that combines good knowledge of IR theories of alliance formation and hierarchy with detailed examination of a single case study. The overall focus of the thesis is clear and well justified and the author was able to find a relevant gap in both theoretical and area-oriented literature. Last, but not least, the author was also able of synthesizing both historical and IR/PolSci literature on Qatar and its foreign relations into a coherent narrative and put forward several interesting findings.

However, the thesis has also some shortcomings that slightly hamper its potential. The most important of these is only roughly sketched methodology and operationalization of the theoretical and conceptual debate. This subsequently impacts the detailed and informed, but slightly unfocused analysis, which at times feels like it is going into too many directions at the same time. Although I understand that it is difficult to translate the richness of Qatari case study into a focus on single most important factor, I believe that more rigorous methodology would help to sort out the more and less important variables and make stronger theoretical claims. Alternatively, it could at least help to structure the historical narrative in a more coherent manner (e.g. according to levels of analysis or other predefined criteria).

Minor criteria:

I have only few minor comments in this category. I believe that relevant literature is very well covered, although historical analysis could have been based on larger number of sources. The thesis is at times written in quite a flowery language and could be made more concise at several places, but it keeps a reader focused and engaged. In general, referencing could be more frequent and rigorous and there are some minor issues (e.g. page 48), but these do not significantly impact the quality of the thesis.

Overall evaluation:

While I had doubts that the thesis will be ever finished several times throughout the process, I am very happy that the author proved me wrong. Matěj Denk was able of producing a well-developed text that definitely fulfils the required criteria of a master's thesis and in some areas even surpasses them. Although the empirical analysis could be more rigorous and systematic, the thesis is able of finding an important gap in present theoretical research and propose several novel findings based on thorough empirical research.



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Suggested grade: C

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dana", written on a light-colored rectangular background.