At the outset it is essential to mention that this has been a rather difficult work to review. Dan has been rather brave in his attempt to work on a multi-disciplinary thesis and analyse the workings of an International Organisation like the Arab League. It does not mean however he has succeeded in making this a well written and researched MA thesis.

In structure, the thesis lacks a clear hypothesis. The title lends itself to a possible hypothesis, yet one is inclined to feel that the topic lends itself better to be a Journal article or magazine piece. In short there is no clear research design or definition of a research question or problem. There is a haphazard rather confused attempt at applying in my opinion, possibly inapplicable theories to the functioning of the Arab league and a further dissection and analysis within largely incorrect parameters.

In the first section he basis his assumptions on the Arab league conforming to the structure of a ‘Business or Organization’ run for the purpose of mercantile profit and then comments on the design of the league using Borgatti and Connor and their theories on Organisational design as a basis. Dan would have been better of using an ‘International Organisations Theory’ base here analyzing the realist perspectives for the formation of the Arab League. Keohane and Nye are a few theorists who come to mind. Later on his use of Lebow’s and Salzman’s Cultural theory work stands out.

The empirical data used in the second part too is inconsistent at points. (Case in point refers to the Egypt’s population figure on Pages 38 &40). This section is looks at the differences in the Arab league, based on different criteria including the charter of the League and on the basis of differences between member countries. The initial parts are largely a re-statement of fact and could have been avoided. Its towards the end that Dan redeems this section with a look at Inter-Organisational Conflict, discord and the multiple interpretations of Islam that exist within the league.

The third section is where the gist of Dan’s argument lies and one wonders why this was not used as the base for the thesis and expanded upon to make it a far more compelling argument. The recommendations are a bit tongue-in-cheek, but the conclusions are surprisingly apt and in the vein of an expert in the region.
While the thesis has a lot to be criticized for there exist definite plus points though. It is brave; it is original, whenever appropriate theoretical perspectives are used the analysis and polemic generated is good. As mentioned earlier, it is a unique effort which needs to be encouraged across the IEPS program, but perhaps guided better or within the realms of a limited research question focused on perhaps just one aspect. The literature and reference sources used, though appropriate are sorely lacking for an MA work, when one is expected to have done a large amount of background reading and support rhetoric with up to date journal articles and position papers.

Despite all its shortcomings it is one of the most interesting theses I have read in the last few years and would recommend that it be graded with a ‘2’ or ‘Very Good’. I hope that in the future Dan will realize the shortcomings of this thesis and work on a more clear hypothesis.

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