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Security Sector Reform in Armenia

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Reviewer: Dr. Ondrej Ditrych

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The thesis has a clearly defined and relevant topic. The author promises to conduct a theoretically informed empirical analysis of the case of security sector reform in Armenia. The “theory” consists more of a conceptual framework derived from relevant documents by international governmental and nongovernmental organizations. On one hand, this limits the potential of the paper and leaves its analytical promise only partially fulfilled. The research question is defined somewhat broadly, in terms of the underspecified notion of “dynamics”, while in ideal case it should have related to some theoretical debate about security sector reform (the author promises to conduct an *instrumental* case study, after all). Also, the author puts forward no hypotheses, just a list of variables, from which one may indeed deduce some implied hypothesised causal relationships, but these are not grounded in, or related to any theoretical literature. On the other hand, a clear conceptual framework that the author lays down in the first chapter(s) is sufficient to organize the following analysis of the selected case that is clear and logical. The writing is lucid and argument flows, even if at the (sub)chapter level it could be somewhat better focused and organized. Moreover, partly due to the sources relied on, description in the first chapters is conflated with evaluation (e.g. an argument about a lack of comprehensive framework for the EU’s SSR activities, which would deserve more elaboration to be substantiated) and prescription (e.g. about the appropriateness of inclusion of mine action in peacebuilding agreements).

In conclusion, the thesis, despite certain theoretical and methodological limitations, provides a clearly conceptually framed and organized analysis and critical evaluation of the main aspects of the security sector reform in Armenia. Despite a potential for a deeper (more detail could be provided on particular reforms) and theoretically informed analysis, it meets all requirements to be accepted.

RECOMMENDED GRADE: EXCELLENT