



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Nathan James Frank Williams

Title: A FAREWELL TO ARMS: NON-MILITARISATION AND THE PARADOX OF MILITARY INSECURITY

Programme/year: MISS/2016

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/external assessor): Tomáš Kučera

Criteria	Definition	Maximm	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	30
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	40
<i>Total</i>		80	80
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	20
TOTAL		100	100



Evaluation

Major criteria:

CRQ: This master thesis takes the aim to 'examine the effect that non-militarisation has on the incidence of intrastate conflict'. In particular, it attempts 'to shed light on the causal mechanisms responsible for the resultant finding'. The research question is original, relevant, and, in light of the findings, hugely important.

Theoretical/conceptual framework: The entire thesis is built up in an absolutely professional way. Starting with exhaustive literature review, the thesis proceeds with clear and in-depth explained articulation of hypotheses.

Analysis: Both Large-N quantitative analysis and comparative case study methods are applied in a perfectly confident manner. The author is aware of limitations of both approaches deals with it accordingly. Although the LNA does not bring statistically significant results, in combination with comparative case study of Haiti and Panama the thesis produces unambiguous and politically very important results.

A minor criticism can be made about the choice of hypotheses examined in the case studies. While the analysis of feasibility, praetorianism and 'militarism of the mind' is incredibly insightful and contributes heavily to the final results, the analysis of security dilemma (6.7), as author admits, offers little explanatory power. And section on development (6.8), although important for the general debate, does not produce convincing results about the examined causal relationship.



Minor criteria:

The number of sources actively used in the thesis is absolutely impressive, the adherence to formal standards of academic texts is flawless. It is only the occasional presence of redundant words which has escaped final proofreading that renders the aspect of presentation short of perfection.

Overall evaluation:

It is near obligatory to say that a diploma thesis deals with an intellectually interesting and politically relevant question. In this case such a phrase would be an understatement. In author's own words:

The continuing policy significance of this topic is simple: in 2015 states spent a total of USD1.7 billion (Perlo-Freeman et al. 2016) based on the assumption that a larger (or indeed, any) military begets security. This is an expensive gamble on an untested assumption; an assumption which may in part prove to be erroneous (p.2).

Despite the importance of this topic, there is a genuine gap in the literature and this thesis contributes to filling this gap in a professional way. Rigorous analysis allows the author to address the central research question in a humble, yet straightforward way:

either there is no relationship between non-militarisation and intrastate war, in which case states are spending billions of dollars ineffectually and incurring a number of opportunity costs to social and economic development; or there is a relationship and the maintenance of a standing army is increasing the probability of civil war, potentially by up to 220% in a given year (p.80).

The thesis thus presents a not so commonplace combination of rigorous empirical analysis and normative conclusions. The quality of this work by far exceeds the usual standards of diploma theses. I am convinced that a



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version of this thesis not only can succeed in a respected academic journal but, even more importantly, the results ought to receive wider attention.

Suggested grade: Excellent (A)

Signature: