



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 (external assessor): Michal Parížek

Criteria	Definition	Maximm	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	30
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	39
<i>Total</i>		80	79
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	20
TOTAL		100	99



Evaluation

Major criteria:

This is an excellent thesis dealing with an interesting topic. It does something that also scholarly studies only rarely do – look in detail into some cases that are typically under most people’s radar and use these rarely discussed cases to provide interesting insights into major topics of general relevance.

The overall setup of the thesis is very strong (research question, methodology, etc), I have no critical comments there. The thesis is original in its target and professional in its execution.

Some smaller points:

I very much appreciate the very careful, nuanced, and sophisticated way the large-N analysis is performed. The author is clearly well aware of the limitations of the approach and deals with them in a very open and transparent manner.

I like that the author takes the pains to not only create a new dataset with the DV and the IV, but also to calculate the values of important controls, in particular the external threat. There is an obviously huge amount of work put into all this.

I am not convinced by the reasoning behind the exclusion of GDP pc and GDP pc growth in models 2 onwards. Sure, one of the several theories indicates these might be intervening variables. But then this could be said about many factors included, since the theories cover so many. It is a virtue of the analysis that it considers multiple controls, all theoretically rooted, but possibly more of them could be seen as intervening in at least one of the considered theoretical frameworks.

To be sure, this does not invalidate the analysis. In fact, seeing the results, I pretty much trust the effect of non-militarisation dummy is clearly present. I would not be too worried about the 5% criterion either, 10% is often also considered acceptable.

In terms of choosing from the models, I think the King&Zeng model is the most conservative, also showing no significance. My hunch is that if this was to be turned into a scholarly (article) study, this model for rare events would be considered the most appropriate. Again, the author does not over-interpret his results, so I do not mean this as a criticism.



Small note: I am not certain the provided reasoning with regard to the “feasibility of war” thesis is sound, in particular when it comes to the lack of available arms for the rebels. I can hardly imagine it would be so difficult for the rebels to obtain arms if they had the financial resources.

Minor criteria:

No comments.

Overall evaluation:

The author has researched and written an excellent thesis which I believe satisfies that standards of professional scholarly work. Since I do not work in the field, I cannot judge the substantive importance of the findings, but personally I found them interesting and I can easily imagine reading an article based on this research in an academic journal. Good job!

Suggested grade: excellent (1)

Signature:

Prague, 31/8/2016