



## Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Joshua Wayne Kent

Title: Insurgent Governance Systems: The Effectiveness of the Taliban and the Islamic State

Programme/year: MISS (2016)

Author of Evaluation (thesis supervisor): Dr. Ondrej Ditrych

Criteria	Definition	Max.	Points
<b>Major Criteria</b>			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	<b>10</b>
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	<b>25</b>
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	<b>30</b>
<i>Total</i>		80	<b>65</b>
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
	Sources	10	<b>10</b>
	Style	5	<b>5</b>
	Formal requirements	5	<b>5</b>
<i>Total</i>		20	<b>20</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		100	<b>85</b>



## **Evaluation**

### Major criteria:

The presented thesis is a comparative analysis of two jihadist governance systems, by the Taliban and the ISIS, that seeks to explain the variation in their effectiveness (defined as provision of goods and services to the citizens subjected to rebel movement's rule) by mobilising Mampilly's theoretical framework. The declared objective of the thesis is not to develop a novel conceptualisation of rebel governance, but to extend understanding of it by means of instrumentally conducting additional comparative case studies using existing research design.

The thesis demonstrates the author's substantial commitment and interest in the topic. The research question is relevant and commensurate. The thesis includes an extensive literature review which provides useful and generally relevant context to the research subject, but occasionally suffers from imprecise presentation (e.g. when discussing Mancur Olson's notion of roving and stationary bandits, p. 5), nor are the introduced theories and concepts used in the later empirical analysis. That said, it makes a sound point that rebel governance analysis should be unburdened by the sovereign state paradigm, and includes a useful and updated review of the jihadi governance literature.

Theoretical framework and methodology, introduced in the following chapter, follow closely that of Mampilly. His hypotheses on drivers of effective/ineffective governance are presented in substantial detail, a good case is made for bracketing the research – excluding the internal cleavages criterion –, and the selection of cases is well explained.



The empirical analysis that follows of both cases, the Taliban and the ISIS, consists of rich, detailed and generally well-structured description of the context in which both rebel movements / governments emerged and of how their administration has been organised. (The story of the emergence of ISIS is somewhat incomplete, however, and inaccurate when it speaks of a *merger* with Jabhat al-Nusra, p. 69) The thesis seeks, usefully, to make this description dynamic, that is, to take into account how the administration has developed over time and according to the circumstances of the conflict. (A more general and sound point that rebel governance ought to be conceived of dynamically as conflicts in which rebel movements take part develop and circumstances change is then made in the conclusion.) That said, the case studies could be structured more along the lines of the conceptual framework, i.e. Mampilly's hypotheses.

More importantly, the chapter that presents outcomes of the comparative analysis successfully contrasts the two rebel governance systems against each other – perhaps the author could only explain why the Taliban is attributed written with 'secessionist' agenda –, but these variations are only partially related to Mampilly's hypotheses. Therefore, these hypotheses cannot be considered as thoroughly tested in the end in terms of the independent variables' values affecting the dependent variable, effectiveness of the governance systems (and possible departures from Mampilly's model identified and their explanations suggested, possibly with the focus on the specifics of jihadi rebel governance), which limits the thesis' contribution.

Minor criteria:

The thesis is based on a considerable number of relevant sources. In terms of style it is competently written, and meets all formal criteria.



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Overall evaluation: The thesis provides a detailed dynamic description of rebel governance systems of the Taliban and the ISIS. The argument is well structured and draws on a substantial body of relevant literature. The thesis' contribution is limited, however, by the lack of thorough testing of Mampilly's hypotheses regarding the drivers of effective or ineffective governance.

Suggested grade: Excellent / Very Good

Signature: