



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Robin Pánek

Title: U.S.-Saudi Counterterrorism Cooperation after 9/11

Programme/year: MV/2017

Author of Evaluation (external assessor): doc. Oldřich Bureš

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	8
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	20
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	20
<i>Total</i>		80	48
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	8
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	18
TOTAL		100	66



Evaluation

Major criteria:

In contrast to its title, the thesis actually attempted to answer at least two, if not three, allegedly interlinked topics – the foreign policy of the United States to the Middle East, its relation to the changing nature of the terrorist threat, and its impact U.S.-Saudi cooperation in areas of military and counterterrorism. While the thesis does offer several unique insights, it does not offer either a comprehensive account of all of these topics, or the supposed inter-linkages among them. This is due to several factors.

Firstly, several key sub-chapters are very brief, consisting of 1-2 paragraphs only (e.g. 3.1 George W. Bush and the War on Terror just on one page; 3.4 The influence of new terrorist threats on the U.S. foreign policy consists of two paragraphs only and it is based on just one source; etc.).

Secondly, without any explanation, the author has reduced the Middle East to just five countries (+Saudi Arabia) – Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, Syria and Iraq? What about other key states in the Middle East? How can one, for example, not include Iran, Israel or Turkey, both on their own merits and vis-à-vis their relations with/importance to the US and its policies & actions in the region? And what about the other countries in the Middle East, why were they not included?

Thirdly, the selected FPA models are potentially useful for analysis of only two of the three topics (the foreign policy of the United States to the Middle East, and potentially also the U.S.-Saudi cooperation in areas of military and counterterrorism) and the author does not really apply them to analyse either of them. Moreover, from the thesis content, it actually appears that the third topic – the changing nature of the terrorist threat – is actually the key independent variable. This, however, does not really fit any of the FPA models either.

More specifically, FPA models are really only utilized on p. 64-68, but in a rather unorthodox way – the author only briefly discusses why most FPA models actually do not explain well a key feature of US foreign policy in the Middle East (e.g. Obama's foreign policy rift), which he previously identified inductively, independent of any FPA model. One probable reason for this approach (instead of the traditional application of FPA models to explain the processes of foreign policy decision-making) is that FPA models place a great emphasis on internal, rather than external, factors – such as the changing nature of the terrorist threat in the Middle East. This, however, appears to be



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the key independent variable invoked by the author, albeit the actual sub-chapter devoted specifically to this topic (3.4 The influence of new terrorist threats on the U.S. foreign policy) consists of two paragraphs only. This in turn severely undermines the very plausibility of a comprehensive answer to the second (half of the) stated research question “If the changing nature of the terrorist threat influenced the U.S. policy towards Middle East, what was the impact of these changes on the U.S.-Saudi cooperation and relations?”

Minor criteria: No major issues.

Overall evaluation: Despite the aforementioned shortcomings, the thesis still can be recommended for defence.

Suggested grade: 3

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'B. M.' or similar.