



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Nikolas Christodoulides

Title: The Science of the Indirect Approach in Modern War. Resurrection of an Art forgotten?

Programme/year: International Security Studies / 2017

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/~~external-assessor~~): Jan Ludvik

Criteria	Definition	Maximm	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	6
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	15
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	20
<i>Total</i>		80	41
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	8
	Style	5	2
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	15
TOTAL		100	56



Evaluation

Major criteria:

Significant progress has been made since the first draft of a dissertation proposal, yet there remain major issues unsolved. Most importantly, the dissertation remains quite confusing. It is difficult to see the main argument of this thesis. Numerous interesting ideas emerge throughout the text. Yet, many appear unrelated to the thesis' stated aims.

The thesis claims that “the central aim of this research divides in two parts. The first part is devoted in showing that the IA [indirect approach] theory's two basic maxims, dislocation and exploitation are attained through the practice of Chaos theory, OODA theory and Reflexive Control theory. The second part is devoted to showing that the IA theory is the most appropriate method in reaching equilibrium of force, a state that guarantees the non-continuation of war between conflicting parties”. These aims are reflected in the two theoretical hypotheses, (though the hypotheses are in fact questions rather than hypotheses). A rationale for these aims is, however, a bit unclear.

I believe it would be beneficial to make a more straightforward explanation of your research focus and its rationale. How does it relate to the existing literature? You have covered some of this literature in the appropriate sections. But you can expand literature review and should relate your research to the existing literature more explicitly.

The clarity of the dissertation's message needs to be improved. You mention indirect approach, chaos theory, OODA loop theory, reflexive control theory, but it is hard to see what these really are. I miss true conceptual delimitations of these. What are indirect approach, OODA loop, chaos theory... and how they differ? I assume there must be reason for incorporation them into your text. Why? How are these related to the indirect approach?

It seems that you suggest that OODA loop, chaos theory, and reflexive control theory are part of indirect approach. But I am not sure, whether this is what you mean. That I can't tell is deeply problematic.



Furthermore, if you argue that OODA loop, chaos theory, and reflexive control theory are part of indirect approach you need to specify what part. Is a behavior consistent with prescriptions of OODA loop, chaos theory, and reflexive control theory necessary or sufficient for indirect approach to be effective? This needs to be specified.

Next, what behavior in the real world deserves to be described as being the behavior consistent with prescriptions of the indirect approach, chaos theory, OODA loop theory, reflexive control theory? Yet again, this need *ex ante* specification otherwise you cannot say what happens in case studies deserves to be described as the indirect approach.

Dislocation and exploitation should play important part in this thesis, at least according to the chapter 1.2. Research Aims and Intentions and chapter 1.3. Theoretical Hypotheses. Yet throughout the text, there is no substantive elaboration on what the dislocation or exploitations is. Furthermore, the text only sparingly refers to the dislocation and exploitation.

Your reader has little idea about what behavior corresponds to the chaos theory, OODA theory, and reflective control theory in the real world. The reader knows even less as to what is (or is not) dislocation and exploitation. It is then impossible to answer your research question (“are the principles of dislocation and exploitation yielded by the synergy of Chaos theory, OODA theory and Reflexive Control theory?”).

Chapters on Lawrence and Wingate are interesting, but it is difficult to see the purpose of having these particular case studies. The rationale for the case selection stated in the chapter 1.6. Methodological Approach is a bit unconvincing both methodologically and empirically. The thesis states that “the actual reason that these case studies were chosen was because of the leading figures, Lawrence of Arabia and Orde Wingate. Both characters were inspirers of the IA theory”. Methodologically, I see this rather as an argument against selecting the two cases. Both inspired the indirect approach theory, but then other cases when indirect approach was employed in the real world should be used to test whether something unique in indirect approach (as the thesis suggests) helps those who employ indirect approach win their wars. Empirically, both Lawrence and Wingate’s campaign were only episodes of much greater



(and very much direct approach) wars. The thesis puts too much emphasis to the importance of Lawrence and Wingate's campaigns to the entire war.

I expected that Chapter 5 and epilogue should have drawn inferences from your case studies, make synthesis and conclusions. Instead, a number of new information is presented throughout the two chapters. It is often unclear why subchapters like those on economy of force, Roman and Byzantine generals, Ardant Du Picq, Mao tse-Tung, or priming emerge in the dissertations' synthesis. More space should have been devoted instead to explicitly answering the research questions.

Minor criteria:

More substantive use of modern literature related to the topic, like Ivan Arreguín-Toft's *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* would have been beneficial. Furthermore, the dissertation's language (despite huge improvement from earlier drafts of this text) remains relatively difficult to understand.

Overall evaluation:

Overall, the dissertation fails to deliver cohesive and coherent text. It suggests many interesting points but it is much weaker in its attempt to analytically pursue a single research objective. The effort author put into its writing should be, however, appreciated.

Suggested grade:

Good (3)

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jan J.' followed by a long, wavy flourish.