



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Camilla Biolcati

Title: ISWAP Expansion in the Lake Chad Basin

Programme/year: International Security Studies/2023

Author of Evaluation (second reader): Markéta Kocmanová

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	7
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	28
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	25
<i>Total</i>		80	60
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	8
	Style	5	4
	Formal requirements	5	4
<i>Total</i>		20	16
TOTAL		100	76



Evaluation

Major criteria:

In her thesis entitled *ISWAP Expansion in the Lake Chad Basin*, Camilla Biolcati presents an intriguing perspective on population-centered insurgency strategies employed by jihadist extremists to disseminate their ideologies in a geopolitically significant region. This work delves into the 'hearts and minds' approach of the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) as it competes with Boko Haram for influence in the area. Addressing the rise of jihadist-inspired insurgency, a topic of paramount importance with implications for both regional and potentially international security, this research aims to shed light on pertinent issues.

Camilla demonstrates a commendable mastery of the subject matter, showcasing her keen interest in jihadist extremism and insurgency. The adept selection of a theoretical framework and the concise yet well-defined methodological approach underscore her scholarly acumen. Nevertheless, a more critical evaluation of the secondary data utilized would enhance the research's overall rigour.

While the chosen theoretical framework offers the potential for profound analysis, the discussion often remains superficial and overly simplistic, sometimes losing sight of the theoretical underpinnings. A tighter integration of theoretical concepts with the extensive empirical material would amplify the research's impact. Several segments read akin to a historical account of ISWAP in the region, lacking the analytical depth that the population-centred lens could provide.

The work's structure, comprising a whopping five empirical chapters, contributes to a sense of undue lengthiness, occasionally impeding efficient navigation towards answering the research questions. This issue is compounded by the absence of a dedicated discussion section, which results in a direct transition from description to a paragraph-long conclusion.

In essence, discerning the author's responses to her research questions demands a certain level of interpretive effort. Yet, the work holds potential, and with refinements in terms of analytical depth, integration of theory and empirical findings, and an improved structural balance, it could significantly increase its value.



Minor criteria:

The thesis would benefit from a more comprehensive exploration of the literature distinguishing between Salafism and Jihadism, as exemplified by works like Maher's *Salafi-Jihadism: The History of an Idea*, which effectively disentangles these two concepts. The organization of the text also poses room for improvement. Partly due to a lack of strict adherence to the formal requirements set by the faculty and further exacerbated by needlessly extended paragraphs, the overall structure and coherence of the work suffer.

Assessment of plagiarism:

Based on the anti-plagiarism software checks, it is formally confirmed that the submitted thesis is original and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not, in an ethically unacceptable manner, draw from the works of other authors.

Overall evaluation:

Camilla Biolcati's thesis is worthy of recommendation for defence. The thesis is diligently researched, showcasing her thorough grasp of the subject matter. However, it could further enhance its value through deeper analytical exploration and a more refined theoretical discussion.

Suggested grade:

C

Signature: