



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Yohann Michalak

Title: The Consequences of Legitimacy Crises on International Organizations' Policy Output.

Programme/year: International Relations, 2024

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/second reader): Mgr. Jan Dostál, second reader

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	7
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	25
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	33
<i>Total</i>		80	65
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	9
	Style	5	4
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	18
TOTAL		100	83



Evaluation

Major criteria:

I consider this thesis as a above standard work, I especially highly value the main idea of the thesis, the fact that it is questioning the conventional theory positioning a positive influence of legitimacy on performance of IOs, which is the main contribution of this thesis. I consider the proposition of examining the consequences of legitimacy crises on different aspects of policy output of IOs as a highly relevant research avenue, understudied by the existing literature and I think the author has done a good job in terms of analysing it.

However, there are several more or less critical comments. I see as the main shortcoming of the thesis the fact that it is really only a theory-testing work, with no new data or hypotheses brought by the author himself, all datasets and propositions are borrowed from previous works, especially from Sommerer et al. (2022); Agné & Söderbaum (2022) and Lundgren et al. (2023). The thesis has done a good synthesizing work and re-tested the validity of the author's claims, with a good link to various types of IOs' policy output by Tallberg et al. (2016). Nevertheless, it seems as none of the main findings are really new, but the author is aware of that and in the framework of a Diploma thesis it is completely acceptable to conduct a complementary analysis, retesting previous knowledge. Still, on the defence, the author should answer, why has he not also collected himself new data for a different sample of IOs, or for a different time period (e. g. from 2015 until 2022), which would have brought additional value to his claims and made the contribution of this thesis more significant.

The second major reservation I have regarding the thesis is mainly to the suitability, application of quantitative methods and the interpretation of the results of the analysis. Firstly, visual analysis – in the sense of visual representation of data in graphs (the term otherwise denotes the analysis of images, so it would be more appropriate to use the term “descriptive statistics”) – is not really a quantitative method. Moreover, descriptive statistics only provides an overview of the situation and does not tell us about the effects of something, here legitimacy crises on the policy output of IOs – the author sometimes seems to be drawing general conclusions already in this part of the analysis. But I get that there are other, more meaningful methods, like t-tests and cross-section analysis, which are employed in the right way. And there is of course the multivariate regression analysis. The author has to bear in mind that even regression analysis does not confirm any causal link between an independent and a dependent variable, only a correlation effect with a certain degree of statistical significance. Moreover, since the author has used two different datasets, it means also a significant reduction of the sample size used in the analysis – instead of 32 IOs in the Sommerer et al. (2022) sample, the author only uses 13 IOs. This results also in a significant change in terms of generalization of the author's claims for the entire universe of all IOs. Furthermore, the author includes only 4 topics out of 16 policies' topics, “to facilitate interpretation.” This is insufficient explanation – on what



grounds has the author chosen the 4 particular topics? Is it because they are the most frequent, or is it random? Also, the author has not really explained, why he agrees that cultural and development policy topics are more complex than law and crime. The author should answer this during the defence.

The reason why Sommerer et al. (2022) focused only on one dimension of policy output, the number of decisions, is mainly that in regression analysis you need a simplified measure for the dependent variable, which is usually only one. I think the analysis suffers from having too many dependent variables, there are many aspects to policy output characteristics and by design, already from the beginning one would probably predict that there would be no discernible pattern to observe an effect of a phenomena across so many dimensions. The analysis itself confirms that (but no result is also a result).

I am not therefore entirely sure that especially the choice for regression analysis has been right – questions of “how” in general are less suitable for a quantitative analysis, I would maybe suggest rather to employ a comparative case study into specific cases of legitimacy crises and the reactions of the IOs to them (with different cases than the ones selected by Sommerer et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, I have to say that the regression is applied properly (I maybe only miss a test for multicollinearity), the author has demonstrated a good knowledge of the method and overall, this diploma thesis is of a very high quality, especially linkage to existing literature and theories is very strong. Therefore, I evaluate this thesis very positively.

Minor criteria:

The author is using in the entire thesis references in a coherent manner, bibliography is included, the data for replication purposes are also provided. The style and formal criteria meet all the necessary requirements for a diploma thesis. The graphs and tables presented in the thesis are very helpful, correctly represent the data, i.e. the visual representation thus helps to paint a clear picture of the phenomena. The only major inadequacy in terms of sources is not referencing any author describing t-tests or regression analysis as a method of analysis (e. g. Meier et al., 2009). Careful reading of the literature covering quantitative methods for social sciences may have helped the author to address some of the shortcomings of the thesis. Sometimes, the language of the thesis does not really fit the standard of academic texts – especially in terms of describing the author’s process (what has been the original idea, how it has shifted, e. g. the phrases like “As I delved deeper” are not usually used in academic texts). This is a natural process for any author and does not require as much description. In addition, on Table 18 (p. 84), the last hypothesis is cut off in the middle of sentence.

Assessment of plagiarism:

The plagiarism control did not reveal any significant similarities with a previous document (thesis, book, or an article), the thesis is an original piece of work and brings new findings to the field, that have not been published anywhere else.



Overall evaluation: 83

Suggested grade: B

Signature:

References

Agné, H., & Söderbaum, F. (2022). The Costs of Legitimacy for Political Institutions. *Global Studies Quarterly*, 2(1).

Lundgren, M., Squatrito, T., Sommerer, T., & Tallberg, J. (2023). Introducing the Intergovernmental Policy Output Dataset (IPOD). *The Review of International Organizations*, 1-30.

Meier, K. J., Brudney, J. L., & Bohte, J. (2009). *Applied Statistics for Public and Nonprofit Administration*.

Sommerer, T., Agné, H., Zelli, F. and Bes, B. (2022). *Global Legitimacy Crises: Decline and Revival in Multilateral Governance*. Online. 1. Oxford University Press.

Tallberg, J., Sommerer, T., Squatrito, T., & Lundgren, M. (2016). The performance of international organizations: a policy output approach. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(7), 1077-1096.