



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Yohann Michalak

Thesis title: The Consequences of Legitimacy Crises on International Organizations' Policy Output

Programme/year: MAIN/2024

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Michal Parizek

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	9
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	28
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	36
<i>Total</i>		80	73
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	19
TOTAL		100	92



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The thesis addresses a highly relevant topic of the legitimacy crises of IOs and, specifically, their impact on IO performance. In this case, the author focuses on IO output performance. He studies – quantitatively – the presumed effects of legitimacy crises on IO output across a range of IOs and a broad range of output measures. For that purpose, he compiles quantitative data from several recent prime studies in IR and thus creates a novel, encompassing dataset.

The thesis has several important strengths and some relative weaknesses.

- 1) The first major strength is the exceptionally strong positioning of the research in the most recent literature. The framing is based on a very strong, exemplary literature review. The author really identified the most recent literature and situated his work exactly where currently our knowledge of the topic ends and where it should be extended. This is commendable and quite unusual. In fact, it led to some issues with the research, because during his work on the thesis, as the author also explains, new studies were published that partly undermined his original goals. He adjusted his plans accordingly.
- 2) The second major strength is the comprehensiveness of the author's approach. The thesis is robust, very clearly structured, and indeed takes a highly comprehensive and laborious approach to the topic.
- 3) The empirical strategy is well outlined on pp. 57-60, the setup with five layers of analysis is convincing and, again, comprehensive.
- 4) I am aware that the author struggled throughout his work to find ways to communicate the large number of various results in a concise form. For example, he opted for exploring several different dimensions of IO output, which effectively means the need to multiply the number of models estimated. I appreciate that the final version of the thesis goes, probably, as far as it gets in presenting the results in clean, understandable, concise format.

On the more *negative* side, unfortunately it is still the case that especially the part with multiple regression models is difficult to interpret. There is simply too much, too many models, on too little space. Perhaps less (a more selective approach) would have been better. To be more concrete, I find it hard to interpret what exactly is reported in models 11-17. For example, I do not understand the differences in the



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construction of Tables 12 and 13. In the former, it appears somehow different versions of contestation are included as predictors (all at once?), while in the latter not. Do I understand correctly that each of the numbers in each of these tables 11-17 represent the b-coefficient from a model like the one presented on p. 58? That the these tables simple extract that one value of the estimated coefficient? So that eg table 11 in fact summarises $4 \times 21 = 84$ models?

As for smaller points:

- I do not find the way hypothesis H3 is presented very convincing and clear.
- Further, in Table 10 probably only the models with clustered coefficients make really sense statistically.

One difficulty with the thesis stems from the fact that the author does not arrive at any uniform, simple results, other than that the effects of legitimacy crises seem to vary sizably across IOs, over time, and across various crises and IO features. Given that there is no simple finding to orient the text around, the authors ends up presenting a large number of results where mostly the key message is that things are complex. This is perfectly OK substantively, of course. But it make the reading more difficult.

Minor criteria:

Overall, the text is well-written, and it fully satisfies all formal criteria and requirements. There are occasional language imprecisions, but these are marginal and never obscure the meaning. The formal requirements are fulfilled to a high standard.

The supporting data should have been uploaded in SIS or some public data repository, rather than on a Google Drive account (p. 60).

Assessment of plagiarism:

There are no signs of plagiarism.



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Overall evaluation:

The thesis addresses a highly relevant problem, uses well-established concepts, and presents relevant novel empirical evidence. It is very comprehensive and systematic in its approach. It is very well situated in the most up-to-date literature. The execution of some parts of the empirical approach is not particularly clear, or at least clearly presented. Overall, however, this is a very strong thesis.

Suggested grade: A

Signature: