Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

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Title: Legitimising the Launch of Humanitarian Intervention – A Case Study of U.S. Domestic Politics Towards the Phenomenon of Humanitarian Intervention

Programme/year: Security Studies/2024

Author of Evaluation (second reader): Anzhelika Solovyeva

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	**10**	3
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	**30**	20
	Methodology, analysis, argument	**40**	23
Total		*80*	46
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	**10**	3
	Style	5	3
	Formal requirements	5	4
Total		*20*	10
TOTAL		*100*	56

Evaluation

Major criteria:

This thesis deals with an interesting and important topic. However, the execution of the analysis is unfortunate. The formulation of the research question is confusing, besides the very fact that the necessity of asking such a research question is not explained well: in other words, there lacks a research puzzle (e.g. there is plenty of research on how elite discourse influences and sometimes successfully manipulates public opinion, for instance, in the framework of "securitization", the second generation of "strategic culture", etc.; there is also a rich body of knowledge on mixed motives pursued through interventions conducted in the name of "humanitarianism", etc.). The literature review section should have served as a space for the author to engage with these bodies of knowledge, among others closely related to this topic, and explain this work's niche and contributions. Instead, this section is very short and does not bring much analytical value. There is also some contradiction between the research question on the one hand, and the theoretical framework together with the actual analysis on the other (while the former asked about the legitimization of humanitarian interventions in American society, both of the latter focused dealt with rationales and motivations for humanitarian interventions and never engaged properly with the reaction of American society). As a result, the research question was barely engaged with and never really answered.

The author dealt with different time periods within one case so the "qualitative case study method" seems also insufficient as a definition of the core methodology. The potential of discourse analysis was not exhausted within the framework of this study either (the corpus of data was very limited, attention to internal debates lacked, same as to the relationship between discourse and practice, etc.). Case selection could have been better explained too, especially as these were contrasting cases.

The theoretical framework sometimes looks unfocused as it contains a lot of contextual information, besides theoretical insights, and not all the details presented there served the actual empirical analysis as it would usually be expected. The notion of mixes motives was not explored to the fullest either as the author limited herself primarily to the trade-off between realpolitik vs. humanitarian motives.

One of the key conclusions was the following, nonetheless: "What is significant for the American political system is the support of American society for the actions of politicians. American society thus plays an important role in legitimising the launch of humanitarian intervention." However, it does not derive from the analysis. Another key conclusion is not innovative, rather obvious and true not only for the US: "The three case studies thus suggest that even when US policy appeals to

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humanitarian motives, the reality of what humanitarian intervention will mean for U.S. interests is significant." This returns me to my first point made above.

Minor criteria:

Assessment of plagiarism:
Not detected.

Overall evaluation:

This thesis brings together a lot of relevant material, it also has the potential to be developed further and streamlined in terms of the arguments but, in its current form, it lacks a research puzzle, it struggles to make any solid contribution to the existing literature, and it also lacks coherence and a clear line of argument. However, I recommend this thesis for defence as it fulfills the minimal requirements.

Suggested grade: E

Signature: