



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: **Hassan Saad**

Title: The Challenge of Robust Peacekeeping in a Complex Environment: A UNIFIL Perspective

Programme/year: MISS/2024

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): prof. Oldrich Bures

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	6
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	20
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	28
<i>Total</i>		80	54
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	8
	Style	5	4
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	17
TOTAL		100	71



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The reviewed thesis aims to explore the challenges of so-called robust, or perhaps more accurately, complex, UN peacekeeping missions, using UNIFIL as a case study. The research question has not been explicitly formulated, and the introductory chapter is a bit ambiguous even when it comes to the goals of the thesis – they are somewhere between examining the effectiveness/outcomes of UNIFIL and the difficulties it has faced when it comes to living up to the so-called holy trinity principles on UN PKOs (consent, impartiality and self-defense), especially when it comes to impartiality. At the same time, there is a clear focus on the local perspectives of, and experiences with, UNIFIL staff and actions. This rather complex mixture of aims results from the author's inconclusive search for the most fruitful way to make sense of the experience of both UNIFIL staff and locals in Lebanon, his home country. As such, the lack of focus, while understandable from a personal perspective, negatively impacts the thesis's structure and content.

The literature review does touch on most of the key aspects of UN PKO research relevant to the thesis, but not in a very structured way. It does not contrast the key arguments made in the existing literature and does not explain well how the thesis contributes to existing debates.

The same goes for the selection of the theoretical framework. While complexity theory is a plausible option, albeit rarely used thus far to study UN PKOs, the author neglects other existing literature on complexity in UN PKOs, organized hypocrisy, unintended consequences, peacekeeping from below, everyday peacekeeping, etc., all of which would also offer important insights, in UNIFIL, its outcomes and relations with locals. It is not clear that complexity theory can do a better job in this regard, but given the rather broad focus of the thesis, no single theory would probably cover everything well enough.

Data collection was hampered by the inability to conduct the originally foreseen interviews, which could not occur due to the security situation in southern Lebanon. Much of the thesis is therefore based on personal observations by its author, which at times are a blessing (unique insights) and at times a curse (claims about the locals' experiences with and perceptions of UNIFIL that cannot be verified).



**FACULTY
OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**
Charles University

The empirical chapters offer some unique insights but, again, in a rather messy way, lacking structure and focus, thus, at times, also being repetitive. The application of complexity theory is superficial at best.

Minor criteria:

There are minor stylistic issues throughout the thesis.

Assessment of plagiarism:

Not detected.

Overall evaluation:

The thesis meets the required criteria. As the supervisor, I have to note that the thesis was finalized shortly before the submission deadline in July and submitted without my approval. This was in direct contradiction to the instructions the author repeatedly received from my side during the supervision. In the middle of the holidays, I only managed to read and comment on the first draft of the first chapter of the thesis. Since the author's personal circumstances in Lebanon have been complicated, to put it mildly, I understand that writing an M.A. thesis must have been extraordinarily difficult. Hence, I am also a bit more lenient in my overall numerical evaluation than I would normally be.

Suggested grade:

C2

Signature: