



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Gillian Barnett Stark

Title: The Regional Push: Hezbollah Terror Attacks against Israel and Regional Conflict

Programme/year: ISS, 2024

Author of Evaluation (second reader): Emil Aslan

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	30
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	28
<i>Total</i>		80	78
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	20
TOTAL		100	98



Evaluation

Major criteria: This is a stellar piece of research. The author explores the timing and frequency of Hezbollah's attacks against Israel in the period of 2000-2015 in order to determine how these attacks correlated to significant geopolitical shifts in the region, the Second Intifada, the Iraq War, the Syrian Civil War, and the 2014 Gaza War. The author deploys a Poisson Bayesian regression model, framed through the sociological normative constructivist lens, to arrive at fascinating findings. While the interpretation of findings might differ given readers' perspective, the thesis still succeeds in bringing up important theoretically-driven findings that might shape our understanding of the logic linking an insurgent group's attacks to important regional developments. A more standard structuring of the thesis, involving deductive engagement with various strands of literature relating to specific (and explicitly spelled out) hypotheses might have served the author's objective better.

Minor criteria: Well-structured, well-written, a beautiful piece of research that, subject to some revisions (see above point) could be published in a peer-reviewed journal. The thesis would benefit from a more thorough engagement with the related theoretical literature.

Assessment of plagiarism: none detected.

Overall evaluation: One of the best theses I've reviewed over the years. Theoretically-informed, empirically sound, with good analysis and solid data selection and methods. Subject to some revisions, it is my feeling that the text could be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal.

Suggested grade: A

Signature: Emil Aslan



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