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Date: 2020/08/14

Report on the Final Exam

Name of the Chair: Kyohei Yamada

On behalf of the Thesis Examining Committee, I would like to report the result of the Final Exam as follows.

1. Student ID	1B7D08
2. Name	Aung Myo Maung
3. Cluster	Public Management
4. Thesis Examining Committee	Chair: Kyohei Yamada
	Referee: Maung Aung Myoe
	Referee: Yongjin Chang
	Referee: Sangyub Ryu
5. Dissertation Title	Understanding the Stagnation of Democratic Reform in Myanmar Police Force: A Behavioral and Institutional Approach
6. Submission Date	Draft: July 27, 2020
	Final: August 14, 2020
7. Final Exam Date	August 7, 2020
8. Faculty Meeting Date	August 19, 2020
9. Degree Title	PhD in Public Management
10. Result	Pass

I. Dissertation Overview and Summary of the Presentation

The dissertation focuses on a reform in the Myanmar Police Force (MPF) that seeks to incorporate community-oriented policing and examines reasons why the reform has been stagnant. Despite the initiation of the reform in 2013 by the democratic government in collaboration with the European Union, the reform attempt has not been successful; the idea of community-oriented policing has not been incorporated into MPF's operating procedures. The dominant view in the prior work on this topic is that the outright influence of the military over the police force prevented the reform from materializing. The dissertation challenges this conventional view and argues that internal factors within MPF play important roles in explaining the organization's reluctance to fully adopt community-based policing.

With this research gap in the literature, the dissertation seeks to achieve two goals. The first is to provide rigorous description of the reform process to illustrate how the reform stagnated. The second is to examine causes of stagnation. It does so by drawing from existing theories developed in the field of public management and use them to interpret the process of the reform in the MPF.

For the first task, the dissertation builds upon Simon's decision-making study and argues that the reform has been unsuccessful because most decision-makers at MPF had a certain set of values and mindsets that were highly inconsistent with community-policing. For the second task, it claims that decision-makers in the MPF perceived that the degree of uncertainty associated with the reform was high; as a result, "institutional contexts" had a decisive impact on the decisions made by the MPF. Institutional contexts here include "the inherited and instilled military values and the shared belief system with the military institution" (p.80). With a high degree of uncertainty, decision-makers followed military values and ways of managing the organization, which was against the idea of democratically-oriented reforms.

As for data and method, the dissertation relies on interviews of retired MPF officials who are familiar with reform process. Delving into the internal workings of the law enforcement authority – particularly in a country that still has internal armed conflicts as well as experienced political transition only in the recent past with some elements of authoritarian regime remaining – is difficult and sensitive. The student's effort to reach out to the key figures to understand the reform process – from the perspective of those who experienced it – is commended.

For these reasons, the dissertation is scholarly valuable and meets the expectation. However, there were several issues that the examination committee would like the student to deal with before submitting the final version, which are listed in the next section (II). We give the grade of Pass conditional on the student's responding to all these points.

II. Notes from the Thesis Examining Committee (including the changes required to the dissertation by the committee)

After the defense held on August 7, 2020, the committee still finds some shortcomings in the dissertation and would like to the student to address the following three points.

1. The dissertation proposes a new theoretical framework without sufficiently clear descriptions or adequate justification. We believe the student can further clarify his theoretical framework.
2. Related to the above point, the dissertation claims to combine two theories to generate a unified and coherent argument. However, we are not fully convinced yet. Please try to further clarify each argument and the overall conceptual framework, and clearly explain how these two theories are integrated.
3. The dissertation relies on interviews of retired MPF officials to answer the research question and test its argument. While we believe these interviews are highly informative, we do not see interview quotes incorporated in the main text. It would be great if the student could incorporate what the interviewees said and use them to justify your argument.

III. Confirmation by the Chair that changes have been done to the satisfaction of the committee

The student incorporated all the requests made by the committee. He added a discussion in Chapter 3 to clarify its conceptual frameworks and theoretical contributions. The student also acknowledged limitations of combining two theories into a unified framework. Finally, interview excerpts are now incorporated into Chapters 4 and 5, which makes the presentation of the findings more effective and interesting. The revised draft clarifies its conceptual framework, explicitly acknowledges its limitations, and presents findings in a more effective way. The committee is overall satisfied with the revisions.

IV. Overall Evaluation

As explained in Part I, the dissertation examines an important question in the real-world context, particularly in the public sector in Myanmar. Unlike prior study on this topic that attributes blame on the explicit military influence, it examines internal factors in the MPF, which is an important contribution to the literature. The dissertation also builds upon previous theoretical works to provide clear descriptions and interpretations of the complex reform processes. As for data and method, the dissertation incorporates interviews from retired MPF officials. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, I highly commend the student's effort to conduct the interviews of the key figures – data collected is thus unique, important, and highly useful for examining the research questions.

Given the significance of the research question, construction of an original theoretical framework, uniqueness of data, and overall scholarly contributions, the dissertation meets the expectation and deserves the grade of Pass.