



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Jana Uhlíková

Title: Visual Propaganda in China during the Cultural Revolution

Programme/year: International Security Studies, 2018

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Aleš Karmazin

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	4
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	27
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	20
<i>Total</i>		80	
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	7
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	17
TOTAL		100	68



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The author offers a very interesting thesis which is highly original as it follows the recent “aesthetic” and “visual turn” in IR. The thesis builds on these theoretical turns to interpret the Chinese propaganda during the cultural revolution. This is what should be positively acknowledged. Also, the actual analysis of the visual material (posters) is very engaging, but with the objection that its goal is bit obscured (see below).

There are, however, three issues which negatively affect the quality of the thesis. Especially, the first two seem to be important.

- 1) The introduction is engaging and promises a potentially innovative analysis. However, it is here where we encounter one of the key problems, which is that the author has not specified her main goal completely clearly. Although I and the author discussed how to demarcate the goal and puzzle of the thesis during (almost) all our meetings, the thesis would only benefit from being even more specific about it. It might be admitted at this point that the literature belonging to the respective IR turn is often imprecise regarding its research goals (cf. e.g. some works by William Callahan touching on both China and visual turn) allowing for various avenues to be followed and not limiting possibly a broad space of interpretations.
However, being too broad/unclear in specification of the goal has probably prevented the actual analysis from being even deeper and sharper. At some points, it seems to be bit too descriptive although the theoretical and analytical framework has been chosen appropriately.
- 2) The other key issue is related to the selection of the empirical data (i.e. posters). The author is not explicit about the procedure of selection, which propels a lot of questions (How representative can the thesis be? What kind of conclusions can we draw from the thesis?).
The author works with a low number of posters ($n = 6$). On the one hand, it can be seen as a clear disadvantage. On the other, it is not unusual in the works within the aesthetic turn or the fields from which it draws its inspiration (social anthropology) to focus on very narrowly selected material.
- 3) The author also should devote more energy in specifying how her analysis (conducted in the relatively original way) compares to other works on Chinese propaganda although its relationship to other works is hinted from time to time. Is the author able to put forward new findings/interpretations? What is her contribution to the discussion on Chinese propaganda?



**FACULTY
OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**
Charles University

Minor criteria:

When it comes to the structure, it might be more logical to firstly address all the theoretical and methodological issues, then provide the reader with historical contexts and, finally, focus on the actual analysis. That is, the chapter number 5 (Understanding Propaganda) should occur earlier.

Overall evaluation:

While the author proved her skills in offering an interesting critical/interpretative political analysis, her work suffers from a few problems which are of relatively high importance.

Suggested grade: D

However, I suggest the grade might be improved if the author is able to clearly articulate her contribution, main point or conclusion (i.e. What stems from the analysis she has done? How does it enrich our understanding about [Chinese] propaganda?).

Signature: