



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Kryštof Houdek

Title: Analysing the alteration of strategic subcultures: the case of Israel

Programme/year: Bezpečnostní studia, 2019

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Tomáš Karásek

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	6
	Theoretical / conceptual framework	30	23
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	30
<i>Total</i>		80	59
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	7
	Style	5	3
	Formal requirements	5	3
<i>Total</i>		20	13
TOTAL		100	72



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The thesis demonstrates clear enthusiasm of the author for the topic, and represents a major asset working in its benefit. This is definitely not a thesis written after a lukewarm choice of its main theme - to the contrary. The author delved into the study of Israel's strategy, and demonstrated fine understanding of its underlying logic. The picture of it which the thesis paints is complex and vivid.

That being said, the thesis also suffers from several major problems. First of all, the conceptual anchoring: while the thesis claims to be studying Israeli strategic culture (or its subcultures), it mainly focuses on the military level. A more appropriate concept, it would seem, would thus be military culture. The argument, made throughout the thesis, that strategic matters in Israel are predominantly handled by the military, with weak participation of civilian bodies, is valid, but should not preclude more analytical clarity on this matter.

Secondly, the thesis also does not make very clear the distinction between the underlying culture and strategy itself. The proponents of certain modes of strategic thinking (such as the OTRI group) are identified as a military (or even strategic) (sub)culture, but this seems to be too confining. While it is true that the author attempts (to some degree successfully) to link the activities and outputs of such groups to broader cultural issues (which come close to representing 'national character', a concept once favoured by Colin S. Gray), more analytical clarity and, specifically, detachment from the subject matter would be beneficial.

Thirdly, while the theoretical background is presented in a coherent (if not entirely appropriate - see below) manner, the methodology of research is much weaker. The thesis presents a stream of thought that is generally approachable and, due to the his apparent fondness for the topic, often quite enlightening, but lacks better structuring and analytical clarity.

Finally, the selection of the case studies is only partially explained. They seem to be chosen to illustrate various features of contemporary Israeli military/strategic culture, but such goal should be more explicitly outlined. Moreover, while the respective chapter promises cases linked to the civil war in Syria, that is only partially true.



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Minor criteria:

The author delved deep into relevant literature concerning Israel and its strategic affairs, but the opening theoretical chapters (and, to some degree, the text as a whole) suffer from a relative scarcity of references to the sources. The habit to quote a source indirectly, through a reference to a text where it was mentioned, falls short of established academic standards.

The text is generally well written, but on occasion the language gets rocky, with clumsy formulations and some spelling and syntactic mistakes.

Overall evaluation:

The deep interest of the author in the topic has only partially been transformed into a coherent analysis. The resulting thesis would have used better structuring, more conceptual clarity, better explanation of the cases and more careful use of the sources.

Suggested grade: **C**

Signature: