



## Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Nikos Štěpánek

Title: Estonia in the Shadow of Russian Threat: Is NATO Doing Enough to Assure Its Member?

Programme/year: Bezpečnostní studia, 2020

Author of Evaluation (opponent): Tomáš Karásek

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
<b>Major Criteria</b>			
	Research question, definition of objectives	<b>10</b>	9
	Theoretical / conceptual framework	<b>30</b>	27
	Methodology, analysis, argument	<b>40</b>	35
<i>Total</i>		<b>80</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
	Sources	<b>10</b>	10
	Style	<b>5</b>	4
	Formal requirements	<b>5</b>	4
<i>Total</i>		<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>89</b>



## Evaluation

### Major criteria:

The author has demonstrated remarkable clarity and, to use a clichéd term, unity of purpose throughout the thesis (the Czech expression ‘tah na branku’ also comes to mind). The broader issue he addresses (strategic situation of the Baltic countries as NATO members vis-à-vis Russia) has been tackled from many perspectives, but his conceptual niche of assurance is both refreshing and, at the same time, cutting to the core of the problem. The thesis must also be commended for a clever triangulation of general information on NATO’s policies and capabilities through interviews and polls in Estonia.

Two minor drawbacks can be mentioned: First, it is a pity that one of the conceptualizations (or a combination thereof) of assurance, presented at the beginning of the thesis, has not been used a more rigorous guidance for the empirical analysis (Murdock and Yeats’s set of intent/capabilities/actions – p. 9 – comes to mind). The result could have been a better structured argumentation throughout the latter part of the text. And second, at times the argumentation line slightly disappears and is replaced with a list of data, heaped upon each other (page 28 can serve as an example of this phenomenon) – not a pervasive feature, but a slight stain on the otherwise very positive image of the thesis.

### Minor criteria:

As mentioned above, the use of a set of interviews serves the thesis very well, and is definitely a feature that raises its quality. The language could have been a bit more polished, but occasional clumsiness is not to the detriment of the message.

### Overall evaluation:

Well structured thesis with a clearly stated goal and innovative conceptual anchoring, enlivened by the incorporation of interviews undertaken by its author.

Suggested grade: **B**

Signature: