



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Johnathon Ricker

Title: Arctic Defence Diplomacy (Comparative Document and Discourse Analysis of the Arctic Security Strategies of the 'Arctic Five')

Programme/year: MISS (2017)

Author of Evaluation (thesis supervisor): Dr. Ondrej Ditrych

Criteria	Definition	Max.	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	5
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	10
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	10
Total		80	25
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	5
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
Total		20	15
TOTAL		100	40



Evaluation

The thesis proposes to be a discourse analysis of security strategies of the 'Arctic Five' with focus on the prospect of the conduct defence diplomacy to mitigate regional security dilemma. While the chosen subject is undoubtedly one of considerable topicality and import, the thesis in its current form is characterised by major flaws in research design and conduct. Therefore, it cannot be recommended for defence.

It is unclear, first, how the chosen methodology (discourse analysis) can lead to substantively responding to the RQ. In effect, however, the methodology is not deployed as the analysis cannot be considered to be interpretive in any sense, and the author seems to harbour a mistaken notion about what constitutes quantitative methods or how and to what purpose hypotheses are used. (In data analysis section, a hypothesis is formulated that the strategies are manifestations of 'realism', but the hypothesis is not aligned with the RQ or used to organise the following analysis.) Instead, a close reading of the arctic strategies is provided; however, it is not done with focus on elements of defence diplomacy introduced in the literature review, the only section that can be considered to be sufficiently referenced (otherwise, the thesis manifests limited and rather superficial engagement with source material); nor does it follow any other conceptual framework. The inevitable result is merely extended paraphrase with only occasional analytical claims some of which are dubiously substantiated. What constitutes 'mutual understanding and empathy' in the U.S. strategy when the claim is supported by a quote reading '[a]s ice receded and resource extraction technology improves, competition for economic advantage and desire to exert influence over an area of increasing geostrategic influence could lead to increased tension' (p. 51)?



A more serious flaw, however, are repetitions of entire paragraphs in the introductions and conclusions of the subsections related to the individual strategies. Each is concluded (with only a formal variation) with the same paragraph: 'In alignment with the themes of the research project, the individual analysis of the Realm's strategy provides critical information on its defensive material skills; aspects of the tri-governmental identity, language, and shared culture; understanding and empathy for neighbouring interests; as well as intentions to align aims with its Arctic partners. The buildup of defence forces is interpreted as the repercussion of climate change, need to protect the region's human and economic assets, and to counter neighbouring defence developments. The analysis concludes that defence diplomacy is currently an active element of the Realm's foreign and security policies and has a high potentiality to increase within the Arctic region.' This devaluates the analysis and is inconsistent with the standards of academic writing. The comparative analysis that follows comprises either findings that are unrelated to the RQ - the 'external' and 'visual' components of the strategies - or would deserve a significantly deeper development (commonalities related to defence diplomacy). The author is commended for including a series of tables in the appendix, but in the current form, these are populated with data insignificant in terms of the thesis' objective.

In summary, as a result of these deficiencies the thesis may only arrive at conclusions that have limited analytical value and are unrelated to the methodology (which would point to interpretive analysis of e.g. recurrent discursive and/or intertextual patterns), i.e. that defence diplomacy can provide stability to the now prevalent security dilemma. (It should be pointed out that security dilemma is an unstable condition by definition, in contrast e.g. to balances of power which can be associational when they are based on shared norms, or dissociational.)



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The author is therefore advised to submit an amended version of the thesis, considering the suggestions made both now and earlier in writing where it was pointed out, among other, that it was in need of anchoring in theory, or that the thesis statement had to be aligned with appropriate methodology. (He was not discouraged from using PMESII, but it was suggested to him that it is not a methodology, but a structuring device.) While there clearly are habitual differences across the fields of military/intelligence analysis and the academia, I do not share the author's view that they had any impact on the writing process. Moreover, in my personal experience, to clearly define a problem, collect and evaluate evidence methodically and based on transparent criteria are the means to reaching sound analytical conclusions in either field.

Suggested grade: Fail (Resubmit)

Signature: