



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Connor Austman

Title: Discussing the Impact of Private Military and Security Companies on
New Political and Military Realities

Programme/year: MISS 2020

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/external assessor): Tomáš Kučera

Criteria	Definition	Maximm	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	9
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	21
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	27
Total		80	57
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	4
	Formal requirements	5	5
Total		20	19
TOTAL		100	76



Evaluation

Major criteria:

Connor's diploma thesis picks up a timely and relevant question of the impact of private military companies (PMC) in the modern international relations in general and on the area of the military in particular. By exhibiting great insight into the topic, Connor addresses his research questions arguing that the growth of PMCs reduces the 'professional status of soldiers' and de-monopolises 'the hold on the professionalism that traditional militaries hold' (p.11).

The thesis builds on an impressive amount of literature and a range of interesting, though anecdotal evidence. Connor succeeds in addressing the chosen research question with well-substantiated answers; however, the way of argumentation resembles an essay rather than a research article. The argumentation lacks a clear research methodology and a systematic approach to evidence.

Connor's thesis utilises two concepts – military professionalism and neo-Marxist power imbalance. The core of the argument about military professionalism and its lack among PMCs rests on monetary motivation. Nonetheless, one may argue that this reduction is not entirely fair. On the individual level, it would require a rigorous survey to establish the differences in motivations. In any case, it is not sound to assume that financial motivation is not significant among professional soldiers and that contractors (esp. former professional soldiers) are not motivated by other factors (patriotism, soldiering as a way of life) (see e.g. Maleševic 2019: 'From Mercenaries to Private Patriots'). Moreover, Huntington's concept of professionalism is derived from archetypal profession of lawyers or medical doctors, both of them working on a contractual basis. Why private military contractors could not develop professionalism with the guiding norm of responsibility to its clients in a similar way as lawyers do. After all, Presssfield's novel *The Profession* describes private military contractors in the near future.

Minor criteria:

OK



FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
Charles University in Prague

Overall evaluation:

Connor Austman presents a thesis which addresses its chosen research questions with coherency and great insight. Its weakness, however, is its lack of methodologically based approach.

Suggested grade: C

Signature: