



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Alex Downs

Title: ANT-Security Interface and the Current Information Crisis

Programme/year: International Security Studies, 2020

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/external assessor): Filip Vostal

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	30
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	38
<i>Total</i>		80	78
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	20
TOTAL		100	98



Evaluation

Major criteria: Objectives are well defined; clear set of research questions is animating the analysis. The overall argument is outstandingly calibrated and draws on very strong and confident conceptual framework working with up-to-date theories from STS and critical social analysis. Methodology is never easy when it comes to theoretically-oriented theses, but the author has managed to tackle this difficult issue well. I need to highlight here, that even if ANT cannot be treated as methodology – it is more of set of sensitivities and tool – Alex almost managed to turn it in a comprehensive method. Such “translation” would however deserve more extensive discussion.

Minor criteria: Sources, style and formal aspects are excellent.

Overall evaluation: This is highly original, well-presented, innovative, very knowledgeable thesis. It advances unique and highly actual post-disciplinary argument combining latest developments in ANT and security studies. Departing from convincing claim that counter-factual information available via countless communication channels account for risk to security and stability in democratic societies, Alex advances systemic and very informed (!) argument that addresses what he labels “information crisis”. In his analysis Alex develops a conceptual model of ANT-security interface that serves and a framework device through which he further investigates various heterogenous connections between many “actants” comprising complex networks of performative relations. These relations – of ideologies, rhetoric, technologies, people – are then at the center of the information crisis “network”. As any ANT study Alex calibrates his focus and interrogates far-right and alt-right revisionism mediated via cyberspace. The concluding chapters offers policy recommendations that might slowdown and mitigate the information crisis. Just to reiterate: this is an outstanding thesis!

Suggested grade: A

Signature: Filip Vostal